

**INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
AND THE MUSLIMS
1928-1947**

Indian National Congress and the Muslims 1928-1947

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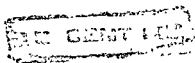
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Preface

A comprehensive study of the political trends as they developed in the Indian freedom struggle during the period 1928-1947, brings its two different facets to light. On the one hand, Indians as a whole with a few exceptions, were fighting to free themselves from the British colonial rule and on the other, in order to put up a strong fight as a united force against colonialism, they had also to strive to achieve the unity of different sections of the Indian people. This struggle, being in the framework of a largely agricultural country with semi-feudal relations dominating the rural areas, took a form where religion and nationality were confused with each other and the threat of united struggle for national independence being diverted on the basis of communal disunity was looming large. Thus the communal question became part and parcel of the national question, although religious freedom within nations is quite different from national independence.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the leadership of the Indian National Congress, which was leading the national struggle, was also deeply involved in dealing with the communal question. Therefore, an assessment of the policy of Indian National Congress towards the Muslims is an important element in the proper understanding of the historical developments that finally culminated in the establishment of two dominions of India and Pakistan under the Commonwealth in 1947.

Keeping the above facts in view, I have endeavoured to present a dispassionate analysis of the relations then existing between the Congress and the Muslims. For this I have largely drawn on certain original sources such as manuscripts, letter correspondence, press statements etc. concerning the period. In this work at several places I have reproduced the source materials in their original form which, while having been slightly separated from the main text, have been adduced as an essential relevance with the present study.

For the book I have collected materials from various sources. A vast number of unpublished official and non-official source materials are covered by this study.

The records of the Congress Working Committee have been deposited at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. This Library has a large collection of Nehru's letters as well as other private papers of the national leaders. To have access to certain confidential papers preserved there, I had to seek special permission from the former Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi and I am grateful to her for allowing me to consult those papers which undoubtedly enabled me to get a wider perspective.

The letter correspondence and papers of Mahatma Gandhi are found in Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, New Delhi. The official records are preserved in the National Archives, New Delhi. The Sapru House Library, New Delhi, also is equally rich with vast records of the A.I.C.C. resolutions, reports, paper cuttings etc. on the subject. The National Library in Calcutta also has a few collections of private papers. I have also consulted the Sapru papers and manuscripts. Besides, I got some materials from the Gandhian Institute, Varanasi, as well. The information culled from these sources has proved to be of immense help to me in giving this book its present form and shape.

I hope, this book will help in throwing new light on the subject.

Muzaffarpur
November, 1979

Padmasha

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Introduction

The Hindu-Muslim conflict existed both before the emergence of British power in India and the introduction of separate electorates in 1909. It is often admitted by the historians that Emperor Aurangzeb was responsible for increasing Hindu-Muslim tension by trying to Islamicize the Mughal government. But if we go to the root of the history, we find that "despite contact, co-operation and mutual influence which reached their height in the time of Akbar (1542-1605), who attempted a synthesis of Islam and Hinduism, Muslim and Hindu communities maintained distinct social, as well as religious identities."¹ At the same time the Hindus also tried to revive from the Muslim dominance as Sir Jadunath Sarkar observes the role of Shivaji, the Maratha leader, on the revival of Hinduism—

Shivaji has shown that the tree of Hinduism is not really dead, that it can rise from beneath the seemingly crushing load of centuries of political bondage, exclusion from the administration and legal repression; it can put forth new leaves and branches; it can again lift its head up to the skies.²

1 Syed Sharfuddin Pirzada, *Foundation of Pakistan* (Karachi, 1970), Vol. I, Introduction, p. xli.

2 Jadunath Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times* (Calcutta, 1952), p. 390.

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And after Aurangzeb's death in 1707, when Muslim power started disintegrating, Muslims were so alarmed by the growing power of the Hindus under Maratha leadership that a sufi scholar named Shah Waliullah (1703-81) was inspired to write a letter to Ahmad Shah Abdali to implore India to protect the Muslim position. Shah Waliullah writes :

In short, the Muslim community is in a pitiable condition. All control of the machinery of government is in the hands of Hindus because they are the only people who are capable and industrious. Wealth and prosperity are concentrated in their hands. While the share of Muslims is nothing but poverty and misery... At this time you are the only king who is powerful, far-sighted, and capable of defeating the enemy forces. Certainly it is incumbent upon you to march to India, destroy Maratha domination and rescue weak and old Muslims from the clutches of non-Muslims. If, God forbid, domination by infidels continues, Muslims will forget Islam and within a short time become such a nation that there will be nothing left to distinguish them from non-Muslims.³

There were, in fact, these different mental phases of Hindus and Muslims when the British arrived. F.K. Khan Durrani is no wrong in his statement that neither the Hindus nor the Muslims of the pre-British period possessed a national consciousness.⁴ He further explains :

They fought for dynasties, not for causes or nations. Again, had they been a nation, the British could have never conquered India... They were two nationalities, wholly different in their traditions, social structure, moral concessions and psychological make-up, so utterly different indeed, that if at any time the sentiment, which the political philosopher calls national consciousness, were to awaken in them and become

3 Cited in Khalid B. Sayeed, *Pakistan: A Formative Phase* (Karachi, 1968), p. 4.

4 F.K. Khan Durrani, *The Meaning of Pakistan* (Lahore, 1941), p. 46.

dynamic, they could not but react differently; they could not but grow into two separate nations.⁵

The orthodox Hindu masses started efforts for the Hindu revivalism and consequently in 1838, the Dharma Sabha was founded by Kashi Prasad Ghosh in order to protect the time-honoured Hindu social customs and religious practices. On the other hand the Muslims were equally keen to start an equally strong revivalist movement.⁶ F.K. Khan Durrani rightly gives an analytic view of both :

The Hindu's race consciousness is very strong... The Muslim's race consciousness is very weak. . . But their religious consciousness is very strong. The sources from which the two peoples derive their inspiration, their moral concepts and spiritual nourishment are different. So in spite of their centuries of close association and sympathetic intercourse, the Hindus and Muslims remained separate... For nationalism or nationhood is nothing but the consciousness of separate nationality becomes dynamic.⁷

So far as the question of nationality stands, the comments of some critics alarm the mind.

Even today it is a matter of controversy whether Indians had the feelings of nationality and whether India was at any time a political unit in the true sense of the term. Harrison tells that before the British rule, there was nothing like oneness in India.⁸ According to another critic : "We Indians had never been a nation, we were divided by our religion, race, castes and languages."⁹ There was no feeling of consolidation in India, either Maharana Pratap in medieval age or Rani Laxmi Bai in

5 *Ibid.*, p. 47.

6 A. B. Raiput, *Muslim League, Yesterday and Today* (Lahore, 1948), pp. 9-10.

7 Durrani, n. 4, p. 47.

8 S.S. Harrison, *India—The Most Dangerous Decades* (Madras, 1960), p. 4.

9 Kharshwant Singh, "Why the Indians Love and Hate the British", *Illustrated Weekly of India* (Bombay), 10 December 1972, p. 12.

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modern age fought for the regional causes not for India as a whole. So far as political unity is concerned, Durrani says: "The ancient Hindus were not a nation, they were only a people, a mere herd."¹⁰ Valentine Chirol's statement supports this view that "India has never approached to political unity any more than Europe has except under the compulsion of a conqueror."¹¹ "So much for ethnic unity", maintains Mario Pei, "India has thirty-three major tongues alongwith a host of minor tongues and dialects."¹²

Though all the above mentioned statements are not without logic, we should not regard them as completely true. Scholars who totally deny the national entity of India in ancient times, deny all the glorious past of India under the regimes of Maurya kings, Gupta kings etc. Starting from about 500 B.C., which represents the dawn of recorded history in the sub-continent, we find that before the advent of the Muslims, the sub-continent as a whole was time and again consolidated into a single political and administrative unit under a number of Hindu dynasties. Afterwards, we find wave upon wave of the foreigners pouring into the land, either as peaceful traders or proud conquerors. And finally with the Muslim conquest, the large part of the country was again brought under centralized control during the reign of Allauddin Khilji in the fourteenth century. Malik Kafur, a famous general, also subdued almost the entire regime of South India. Subsequently disintegration set in and it was not till the Mughals came to power that India was again ruled by a strong hand at the centre. Again after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 the provincial governors gradually became independent, even though some semblance of allegiance to the Mughal throne was maintained for some time in certain cases. In any case, the sub-continent could only be politically united when the British took over. It is said truly that the lack of political unity was one of the main reasons for the success of the new rulers.¹³

10 Durrani, n. 4, p. 34.

11 Cited in C. H. Philips, ed., *Partition of India* (London, 1970), p. 332.

12 Saverd, n. 3, p. 288.

13 Philips, n. 11, p. 320

So far as the Muslim advent in India is concerned, it seems strange that the first Muslim contact with India was a peaceful one. Long ago the Muslims came as invaders from the North-West, the Muslims had established trade settlements in the South with their distinct culture-pattern. The Arabs had commercial relations with India from much earlier time than the Arabs' invasion of Sind occurred. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad states the true position of the Indian Muslims through this personal affirmation : "I am a Muslim and this thought fills me with pride. The traditions of Islam during its career of thirteen centuries go to form my heritage." He further said :

In addition to these feelings, I am also the Professor of another, which has been created by the stark realities of my external life. The soul of Islam is not a barrier to this belief; in fact, it guides me in this path. I am proud to be an Indian. I am an integral part of this unified and impartible nation.¹⁴

The Muslims, thus, do not regard themselves as aliens, as the British were when they held sway over this country. The history of Islam has shown that this great religion is capable of adjustment. The historic year 712 is well-known to all when Mohammad-bin-Qasim appeared and established Muslim rule in Sind upto Multan. As soon as Qasim was on the throne, he guaranteed freedom of worship for all, which was particularly welcomed by the oppressed Buddhists of Sind and entrusted both Brahmins and Buddhists with responsible post in his administration. Thus, following three centuries of Arab rule, the Turkish Ghaznavids appeared in the sub-continent, and their rule over the Peshawar region, Punjab and Multan, roughly corresponding to what now constitutes West Pakistan lasted for about 200 years until the middle of the twelfth century. It was only after Mohammed Ghori's conquest of Delhi and Ajmer in 1192 that Muslim rule began to be established over the whole of the north of the sub-continent. This phase of the early Muslim rule

14 A. A. A. Fyfe, *A Modern Approach to Islam* (Bombay Delhi, 1963), pp. 112-13.

in the northern plains of the sub-continent, generally referred to as the Sultanate period, witnessed the rise and fall of five dynasties in about three hundred years, between 1206 and 1526: the Slaves-Mamluks or Qutab (1206-1290); the Khiljis (1290-1320); the Tughlaqs (1320-1413); the Sayyids (1414-1451), and the Lodhis (1451-1556). Thereafter the Chughtai Timurid, Zahir-ud-Din, Mohammad Babar, founded the Mughal Empire with the conquest of Delhi and Agra. It was in the time of Shahjahan (1627-1656) and Aurangzeb (1656-1707), that the Muslim rule covered the whole south of the sub-continent. Even after the downfall of the Mughal Empire after the death of Aurangzeb the Muslim rule prevailed in a number of States (Awdh, Hyderabad, Bengal, Mysore, Delhi etc.) and remained till the fall of Tipu Sultan in 1799.

Thus the brief history of Muslim rule in India proves that the Muslims had a glorious past in India and there are full facts on their part to regard India as their domicile.

Here rather an irrelevant, but not least, question may arise as to why India in its past always fell so easily to the invaders from the north-west. And that is why the Hindus, being orthodox and rigid by nature, having a majestic history of their administration, calling themselves the guide of the human civilization, always failed to resist the invaders, not only politically, but even culturally and socially.

The reasons are many and comprehensive. Probably the Hindus fell because their rulers signally failed to make a correct assessment of the fateful significance of the invasion from the north-west.

Because the vast, unwieldy and ill-disciplined Hindu armies had become totally ineffective as instruments for winning wars.

Because, the concept of "Dharma-Yudha" was carried to absurd lengths, despite repeated experience that the opposing forces cared little for the means they employed to gain their end.

Because, the fate of the Hindu armies and the issues of success and defeat depended almost entirely upon the ability and good fortune of the commander.

Because, the time-honoured and well-tryed principle, namely,

that offence is the best form of defence was not popular with the Hindu strategists.

Because, the common man was not much concerned with what was happening around him.

Because, social disharmony played a great part in hastening the Hindu downfall.¹⁵ Al Biruni, the observer of medieval India, writes:

The Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no king like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolish, vain, self-conceited and stolid. They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they know, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people, still much more, of course from any foreigner¹⁶.

Though the above quotation leads to a controversy of its truth, it cannot be denied that the Muslim conquests from time to time demoralized the Hindus whose debasement increased with the passage of years. To add insult to injury, destruction of temples claimed the magnitude of Muslim policy.¹⁷ The cruelty of Allauddin Khilji was matched only by his hatred for the Hindus had indeed become an obsession for the Muslim rulers. All these factors witness the bitter relationship between Hindus and Muslims at large. It is just to examine as to why the Muslim rulers were so allergic to the Hindu citizens. The all tragic stories of masses, idol-smashing, destruction of Hindu architecture etc. tell the tale of their unkind attitude towards Hindu culture. Did really the Islam include, as the Muslim leaders and rulers used to say and to encourage their army for "Zehad", the destruction of Hindu culture, as one of the religious tasks? It is hard to believe. No religion preaches intolerance and inhumanity and Islam certainly does not. There must be political reasons behind it. Before the arrival

15 V.B. Ku'karni, *India and Pakistan* (Bombay, 1973), pp. 40-41.

16 *ISL*, p. 45.

17 *ISL*, p. 42.

of Malik Kafur's army into the South, Muslims had already established their settlements in important centres of trade; they had entered into dealings with people living around them, and from this intercourse of Arabs and Tamils a number of communities of mixed descent like Ravuttans and the Labbes had arisen¹⁸.

The annals of Muslim rule in India are by no means only religious wars. In the historic battle of Panipat, Babar got victory over another Muslim ruler, Ibrahim Lodi. It was in no case a religious war, but it was fought simply to get on political might. History repeated itself when the Afghan Sher Shah overwhelmed the forces of Humayun. These facts show that before the British advent there was not any clear sign of communal consciousness. Even besides the religious intolerance of some of the Muslim rulers, there was harmonized relation between the Hindus and Muslims in Indian society. In spite of the fact that the Vijaynagar Kingdom was continually at war with the neighbouring Muslim kingdoms, there appears to have been great religious tolerance and great appreciation of each other's cultures. The Adil Shahi Sultans of Bijapur and Nizamshahis of Ahmednagar freely patronized Maratha chiefs, and employed Hindu officers for their administration and Hindu troops in their armies. The Hindu rulers of Vijaynagar reciprocated these feelings; they took Muslim troops in their employment, encouraged Muslim traders and built mosques for their worship¹⁹. Later the same policy was followed by Sher Shah (1486-1545). Unmindful of the advice of the Ulema, he pursued a policy of religious toleration and equal justice among his subjects.

Moreover, the generosity, fraternity and religious tolerance of Akbar, the Great, need the emphasis on the fact that there was smooth relation between Hindus and Muslims. Shivaji also had in his employment quite a number of Muslim military officers. Therefore, in brief, it may be stated that at least there were some rulers under whom both Hindus and Muslims

1

¹⁸ Ashok Mehta, *Communal Triangle in India* (Bombay, 1942), pp. 10-11.
¹⁹ *ibid.* - 12

enjoyed political, cultural and economic unity in India during the days either of Muslim rulers or of Hindu rulers.

The Mutiny of 1857 played a great role in the Indian history and in the relation between Hindus and Muslims. According to Sir Alfred Lyall, after the Revolt of 1857—

the English turned fiercely on the Mahomedans as upon their real enemies and most dangerous rivals; so that the failure of the revolt was much more disastrous to them (Muslims) than to the Hindus. The Mahomedans lost almost all their remaining prestige of traditional superiority over Hindus; they forfeited for the time the confidence of their foreign rulers, and it is from this period that must be dated the loss of their numerical majority in the higher subordinate ranks of the civil and military services.²⁰

The British, to serve their purpose of domination in India, started to suppress the Muslim rulers of India. Among the rebellious, the Muslim leaders in the mutiny, did more commendable work to overthrow the British. Therefore, after the suppression of the mutiny, the British Government planned on the one hand to suppress the Muslims so that they might forget their glorious past in India and on the other, to play a "divide and rule" policy. For some decades after the mutiny, the Muslims were the villain, Hindus the pampered subject. After the Indian National Congress began to gather support, the Hindus became suspect and Muslim loyalties were cultivated as a counterpoise.

Therefore, after the Mutiny, for a long while the Muslims remained under the shadow, poor and discouraged community,²¹ the Indian National Congress got birth in 1885.

In the year 1885, Cotton pointed out that significant changes were taking place in India and a new nation was rising before his eyes. Cotton wrote that this happened mainly as a result of British rule, and especially because of the growth of English

20 Sir A. C. Lyall, *Asiatic Studies: Religious and Social* (London, 1884), edn 2, pp. 239-40.

21 Edward Thompson, *East India for Freedom*—London, 1910, p. 53

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education, a feeling of nationality was fast developing in the country which needed only an organization to crystallize.²² It was the cause of the British fear and that is why Lord Dufferin who came as the Viceroy of India in 1884, soon after taking over the charge of his office, frankly admitted:

The most patent characteristic of our Indian cosmos is its division into two mighty communities as distinct from each other as the Poles asunder in their religious faith, their historical antecedents, their social organization and their natural aptitudes; on the one hand, the Hindus, numbering 190 millions, with their polytheistic beliefs, their temples adorned with images and idols, their veneration for the sacred cow, their elaborate caste distinctions and their habits of submission to successive conquerors, on the other hand, the Mohammadans, a nation of 50 millions, with their monotheism, their iconoclastic fanaticism, their animal sacrifices, their social equality and their remembrance of the days when enthroned at Delhi they reigned supreme from the Himalayas to Cape Cameria.²³

A.B. Rajput states that clever and mischievous propaganda was started on these lines to create hostility between the Hindus and the Muslims.²⁴

The Congress, however, did not begin as an organization in opposition to British rule. It was founded by Allan Octavian Hume, and the Congress was to serve the purpose of "a safety-valve", an "overt and constitutional channel" for the discharge of the Indian ferment.²⁵ Its fundamental objectives were laid down to be the promotion of Indian nationality, the social, moral and political advancement of the Indian people, and "the consolidation of the union between England and India" by securing the modification of such of its conditions as may be unjust or injurious.²⁶ Thus, the early Congress was a dignified

²² H I.S. Cotton, *New India or India in Transition* (London, 1940), p. 53.

²³ Rajput, n. 6, p. 14.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ S.R. Mehrotra, *India and the Commonwealth* (London, 1965), p. 16.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

debating society.²⁷ Every year at Christmas time a few hundred educated and intellectuals from all parts of the country met in some town for about half a week. In these meetings their tone was loyal and moderate.²⁸ The Congress had thus its foundation, and both Muslims and Hindus could get the membership of the Congress. Since the time the Gandhian ideology of super-communal nationalism had not developed, everybody inside or outside the Congress was frankly a Hindu or Muslim. Communalism had not yet become a term of abuse and still there was a sense of tolerance, sympathy and courtesy between both the communities.²⁹ But after all the Congress was styled as Hindu body.³⁰ Current Indian news reflected the same view.³¹ It was because of the poor strength of the Muslim delegates in the Congress. The table will show the full strength of the Congress between 1885 and 1894.³² The Congress in its early years did get support of a fairly large number of liberal and educated Muslims. Later on Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, one of the chief Muslim leaders of the day, prevented Muslims from intermingling with the Hindus or Congress. After 1885, he appealed frankly to the fears, prejudices and self-interests of his co-religionists in order to keep them away from the Congress.³³

But before we describe the prejudiced policy and attitudes of Syed Ahmad Khan, we must mention here that in the beginning he was generous and liberal man. Once he said: "I regard Hindus and Mohammadans as my two eyes."³⁴ Even after the foundation of M.A.O. College, he justified the position saying that "I would be sorry if anyone were to think that the college was founded to mark a distinction between the Hindus and the Mohammadans...there is not the least distinction between the Hindus and Mohammadans...both are equally treated as boarders."³⁵ But this nationalist leader probably

27 *Ibid*.

28 Mehrotra, n. 25, p. 18.

29 Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided* (Bombay, 1946), p. 18.

30 Rajput, n. 6, p. 53.

31 K. K. Aziz, *Britain and Muslim India* (London, 1963), p. 30.

32 See Appendix.

33 Mehrotra, n. 25, p. 179.

34 Hamid, n. 27, pp. 32-33.

35 *Ibid*.

reacted by some psychological fear of insecurity and after 1885, he began to lose faith in old causes, drifted away from time-honoured loyalties, viewed things from a narrower and more exclusive angle, and emphasized and consolidated Muslim separatism. Later on he began to hate the Congress and called the Congressmen as Bengalis: "If we join the political movement of the Bengalis our nation will reap loss, for we do not want to become subjects of the Hindus."³⁶ It is rather amazing to point out that Syed Ahmad Khan before 1885 laid stress upon the unity of the Hindus and the Muslims. In one speech at Patna on the 27th January, 1883, he said:

Undoubtedly, in consideration of the fact that we both belong to the same country, we are a nation, and the progress and welfare of the country, and of both of us, depend on our unity, mutual sympathy, and love, while our *mutual disagreement, obstinacy and opposition and ill-feeling* are sure to destroy us.³⁷

Moreover, addressing the Hindus of the Punjab, he expressed his regret for his having not been regarded as Hindu there. He said:

You have used the term Hindu for yourselves. This is not correct. For, in my opinion, the word Hindu does not denote a particular religion, but, on the contrary, everyone who lives in India has the right to call himself a Hindu. I am, therefore, sorry that although I live in India, you do not consider me a Hindu.³⁸

Again, in one of his articles he stated:

In our opinion, just as the difference of religion which exists between the Mussalmans and the Hindus ought not to prevent social dealings, mutual affection, love and sympathy,

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Cited in Tarachand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India* (Delhi, 1967), Vol. 2, p. 358.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

between them, so also differences on political questions ought not to prevent social dealings, mutual affection and love and sympathy...Undoubtedly, just by ignoring difference of religion we desire that there should be established between the Hindus and the Mussalmans friendly affection, unity and sympathy, in the same way, by ignoring political differences also, we desire that in social dealings there should be mutual friendship, affection, sympathy and brotherhood among them.³⁹

Therefore, it cannot be said that he was anti-Hindu from the very beginning. In fact, he was a supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity. His differences with the Congress were probably based on considerations of political expediency alone. Before the days of the Indian National Congress, Syed Ahmed Khan had been a strong advocate of the association of all Indians in the Councils of the Government through their chosen representatives. There is an instance of his being a true nationalist when he opposed the idea of special favours for the Muslims and had instead advised them to rely upon self-help.

Nevertheless, there are several examples when he advocated for the unity of both the communities. Even a year before the foundation of the Indian National Congress, he told in his speech at Gurudaspur on the 27th January, 1884: "We (Hindus and Muslims) should try to become one heart and soul and act in unison; If united, we can support each other. If not, the effect of one against the other would tend to the destruction and down-fall of both."⁴⁰ It was really shocking for the Hindu-Muslim rapprochement that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan suddenly changed his mind and turned to the communalism first after the Indian National Congress was established in 1885. There is room to have an analytic study of the causes of his sudden change.

Apparently it seems that he regarded the Indian National Congress as purely Hindu body and developed the fear of insecurity of the Muslim mass.

39 *IJL*, p. 359

40 *IJL*, p. 363

"It may be pertinent to ask", writes Khalid B. Sayeed in his book *Pakistan: A Formative Phase* "as to how Muslims could be expected to participate in the activities of the Indian National Congress which was very largely in the hands of Hindus of Bengal and Maharashtra."⁴¹

Sir Surendranath Banerjee also takes the view that the Congress in those days was not successful in attracting many Muslims to its sessions. Elaborating his views he says :

Our critics regarded the National Congress as a Hindu Congress, and the opposition papers described it as such. We were straining every nerve to secure the cooperation of our Mohamedan fellow countrymen in this great national work. We sometimes paid the fares of Mohamedan delegates and offered them other facilities.⁴²

It is very much admitted that since Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was not convinced with the sincerity of the Indian National Congress, he persuaded the Muslims to keep aloof from the Congress.

Altaf Husain Hali opines that to oppose the Congress had another background as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan became suspicious about the Hindu intentions after 1867, as the Hindus were alleged to have started a campaign in Banaras for the substitution of Hindi with its Devnagri script, for Urdu with its Persian script, as a court language. He, therefore, became reactionary to the Congress and pointed out that Congress objective of representative government meant that Muslims would be swamped by the Hindu majority.

Meanwhile, by 1885, some other factors also had begun working which supported his communal feeling. In the first place, the opportunity for Muslim rapprochement with the English came both in Europe and at home. In Europe, the dismemberment of Turkey by Russia had been thwarted by Great Britain, and the British policy towards Afghanistan was undergoing a favourable change. Consequently, at home, the British attitude towards the Muslims had changed. The old anti-party attitude

⁴¹ Sayeed, n 3, p. 23.

⁴² Surendranath Banerjee, *A Nation's Making* (Madras, 1925), p. 103.

was giving place to a new policy of having sympathy with the Muslim community. The statement of W.W. Hunter in 1871 is very much relevant here. He drew the attention of the government to Muslim grievances that the Muslims require the sympathy, magnanimity from the British.⁴³

Secondly, the tendency of Hindu-Muslim tension was found at that time. It affected the social, political and economic conditions of both the communities. And a competition to get the sympathy of the Government arose between them. Throughout the first three quarters of the 19th century, the Hindus had manifested greater eagerness in the race for office and more active participation in the administration of the British, while the Muslims stood aloof, with the result that public employment and success in the independent professions became to a greater degree the possession of the Hindus. Naturally as pointed out by the Government of India in 1893, "the effect of the exclusion from public and private employment, from which the Mohammedans have suffered, has naturally been to embitter their minds against the Hindus, and reflections on their past state of supremacy contribute to keep this feeling active."⁴⁴

Thirdly, the Hindus and Muslims expressed their direct difference on some socio-cultural phenomenon. Among such differences some are notable such as: (1) cow protection, (2) Hindi-Urdu controversy, and (3) assertion of religious privileges on the occasion of festivals and holy days etc.⁴⁵

Moreover, there started the parallel revivalist movements on both the sides—the Hindus and the Muslims. Among the Muslims, while the school of Shah Waliullah of Delhi and the school established by his pupils at Deoband and also the reform movement led by Syed Ahmed Khan began to restore the Muslim culture and religious fervour among the Hindus, the Dharma Sabha of Radha Kanta Deb of Calcutta, which had been started in the twenties of the nineteenth century to defend Hinduism and to restore the Hindu culture became active.

"By their nature", Tarschand writes, "the movements empha-

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 370.

sized negation and protest and were aggressive and assertive.”⁴⁶ He adds .

Both developed a mood of self-righteousness, an attitude of superiority over the other, and a feeling of “holier than you”. The two communities were already developing a narrow self-centred mentality in matters relating to their material welfare, which was accentuated by the discriminatory treatment of the Government.⁴⁶

Thus already before 1885, the communal tension had come to the surface with suspicion and discontentment for each other. Then the inauguration of the Indian National Congress in December, 1885 made Syed Ahmad Khan alarmed and cautious.

It was not without reaction that in 1886, Syed Ahmad Khan organized the Muslim Educational Conference. It was the first Muslim political organization having the aims to organize the Muslims all over India and to fight for their social, agricultural, religious requirements etc. This organization was followed with a number of other Muslim organizations.

Of course, there was also a different type of Muslim school which gave its heartiest support to the Congress in its beginning. This school mainly consisted of the educated and nationalist Muslims. They were sincerely devoted to the movement of political advancement of India and to the Hindu-Muslim unity. Badruddin Tyabji (1844-1906) was one of them. In 1887 when the Indian National Congress held its session in Madras and elected Tyabji as President, he proved his commendable support to the Congress. He did not give any attention either to the displeasure of the government or to the fury of Syed Ahmad Khan or Syed Ameer Ali. In his presidential speech, he laid stress on the unity of both communities. He vehemently defended the Congress stating : “Come with me into this hall and look around you, and tell me where you could wish to see a better representation of the aristocracy, not of birth, and of

wealth, but of intellect, education, and position, then you see gathered within the walls of this hall."⁴⁷

Thus, there were two schools of Muslim political thought till 1905. One, the school led by or influenced by the ideals of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and other, the school of Deoband and the Ulema, based on the Western education and shared by the nationalist Muslims who supported the view of the Congress. But the year 1905 comes with some new phases in relevance with the relation between the Hindus and Muslims.

The partition scheme was announced on the 1st September, 1905. The new province, called Eastern Bengal and Assam, consisted of Assam and Eastern and Northern Bengal, an area of 106,650 square miles with a population of 31 millions out of which 18 millions were Muslims and 12 millions Hindus. According to the nationalists this was a deliberate blow aimed at the growing solidarity and self-consciousness of the Bengali-speaking population. On the other hand, it was also felt that partition would benefit Muslims of East Bengal. The then Governor Sir Bampfylde Fuller referred in his book that as the partition of Bengal was in favour of the Muslims, a number of Muslims attended the thanks-giving prayers to celebrate the establishment of the new province⁴⁸.

The Congress was obviously shocked for this partition and a movement was started against it inside and outside the Congress.

According to the Muslim writers the movement took a clear anti-Muslim turn and was run and organized on Hindu lines.

Lord Curzon, who was alleged to divide the both communities by the partition of Bengal, justified his stand and cleared it by stating that he was not solely responsible for the partition. He disclosed in 1912 that he was not the author of the partition of Bengal for it had been discussed for twenty years before a final decision on the partition of Bengal was announced.

Any way, the result cannot be denied that it intended to create a gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims.

Truly speaking, by now the Muslims had realized that the

⁴⁷ *Id.*, p. 322.

⁴⁸ *Saved*, n. 3, p. 27.

time had come when something should be done to draw the Government's attention to the existence of their community.⁴⁹

The Muslim leaders needed to have some more strong communal organization which they could build in 1906. Mehrotra opines that it was the growing strength of the Congress, the attention paid to it by the Government after the coming into power of a liberal ministry in England in December, 1905, and the knowledge that a further instalment of reforms was under consideration which spurred the Muslim leaders to action and organize the All India Muslim League in December, 1906. Although in the early days of its foundation for many years the Congress and the League held their annual meetings in the same place and at the same time, they could belong to both and attend both sets of meetings. Both League and Congress wanted the same things and used to send in practically identical resolutions to the Government.⁵⁰

Eventually, a public meeting of the Muslim leaders was held on the 30th December, 1906 where Viqar-ul-Mulk presided. On the motion of Nawab Salimullah, it was decided that a political association be formed styled as "All India Muslim League" for the furtherance of the following objects:

- (1) To promote among the Mussalmans of India, feelings of loyalty to the British Government, and to remove any misconception that may arise as to the intention of the Government with regard to any of its measures;
- (2) To protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Mussalmans of India and to respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to the Government; and
- (3) To prevent the rise, among the Mussalmans of India of any feeling of hostility towards other communities, without prejudice to the other aforementioned objects of the League⁵¹.

49 Pirzada, n. 1, "Introduction".

50 Thompson, n. 21, p. 180.

51 Pirzada, n. 1, "Introduction".

The establishment of the Muslim League evoked different feelings in the Indian Press. The Englishman thought that it would provide an effective answer to the Congress, as well as afford an avenue for the publication of Muslim aspirations, and remarked that "it is high time that the Mohamedans of India found a voice."⁵² While the Bengalis attacked the League and its organizers and warned that it should merge with the Congress for its welfare. Moreover, the Muslim League, as a new party, was well received by the Muslims.

These aims fairly clarify the fact that the very foundation of the League was based on the communal feelings which were just reverse to the Congress ideology. This prevailed throughout the period till the partition of India was announced. It was the cause that from the very beginning of its life by the inspiration of Syed Ahmad Khan, the League looked with an eye of disfavour not merely on the Congress methods of agitation, but also on the Congress ideal of self-government for India on the colonial model. Though from time to time the Muslim leaders or Muslim League tried to have mutual understanding with Congress it must be kept in mind that whenever it tried to make alliance with the Congress it did so for its own sake, for the communal security. We shall find the facts, with examples, during the entire period of independence movement.

The year 1906 has its own importance. It saw the beginning of the rise of Indian nationalism, the force of which the British Government could not totally ignore. The defeat of Russia by Japan in 1905 had increased the prestige of the East in the mind of the Indians. As an effect, Gokhale, the then President of the Congress, said in 1905 that "the goal of the Congress is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves, and that in course of time a form of government should be attained for this country similar to what exists in the self-governing colonies of the British Empire."⁵³ It was in 1906, when Curzon's creation, the Partition of Bengal (in 1905) produced an outburst of anger among the people and the Indian National Congress for the first time put forth its

⁵² *The Pioneer*, (Allahabad), 2 January 1907.

⁵³ K. P. Bhagat, *Indo-British Relations* (Bombay, 1939), pp. 2-9.

demand for "Swaraj" (Home rule). The Government became aware of the fact that the Congress was shaping in other way than what the British had expected. B.G. Tilak was arrested and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. It was this year when the two organizations were established side by side—Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha. Moreover, the Muslims were granted a separate electorate on representation by the Viceroy Lord Minto in 1909. Aga Khan's appeal to Lord Minto in 1906 for the separate electorate can be mentioned here which was published in the *Times of India* on the 6th October, 1906:

We venture indeed with your excellency's permission to go one step further and urge that ...we Mohamedans are a distinct community, with additional interests of our own which are not shared by other communities and these have hitherto suffered from the fact they have not been adequately represented even in the provinces in which the Mohamedans constitute a distinct majority of the population.

To go one step further, on the 24th March, 1908, the Muslim League submitted a memorandum to the Viceroy giving its reactions to the scheme for the creation of Imperial and Provincial Council as propounded in the Government of India's letter of 24th August, 1907. The memorandum said that the principle of class representation in the Legislative Councils was entirely in accord with the sentiments of the Muslim community.⁵⁴

Accordingly separate electorates were given constitutional recognition in the Indian Council Act of 1909. Muslims were accorded not only the right to elect their representatives by separate electorates, but also the right to vote in the general constituencies. In addition, they were also given the weightage in representation.

The Muslim League held its third Annual Session in January, 1910 at Delhi. Aga Khan, in his presidential address observed :

For the maintenance of our due share in the political life

⁵⁴ Parzada, n. 1, "Introduction".

in this country, and for the removal of an old-standing exclusion, which formed a bone of contention between the Hindus and Mohammedans, the separate electorate for Mussalmans was deemed to be an absolute necessity. Now that we have secured it, I hope it will result in a permanent political sympathy and a genuine working entente cordial (relations) between the members of the two great communities.⁵⁵

A.B. Rajput opines that the securing of separate electorates was a great triumph for the Muslims. Separate electorates meant an important political concession to the Indian Muslim population.⁵⁶ No doubt the award of separate electorates to the Muslims had deeply offended the Hindus. This brought the two communities into open rivalry. The communal problem in its earliest phase expressed itself in a demand for adequate representation in councils and other semi-elective bodies. There could be no objection to this demand except that it betokened a separatist tendency which augured ill for the country. This tendency manifested itself in a pronounced form when a demand for separate electorate was made on behalf of the Muslim community and conceded by the British Government. The Congress was not slow to foresee the dangers and vicious consequences of the introduction of separatist element in Indian politics. It expressed its opposition to it in no uncertain terms, but it was powerless to secure withdrawal.

But as circumstances took a different turn, the Muslims' belief in British rule got hurt due to the British-Turk relations. This course of British foreign policy continued to aggravate the anxieties of the Indian Muslims. Events in India also added to the dissatisfaction of the Muslims. The revocation of the partition of Bengal in November, 1911 came as a rude shock to them. The East Bengal was a predominantly Muslim province and its re-amalgamation with Bengal was naturally resented by the Muslims. In reaction, some liberal Muslim leaders planned that they should leave the League and

55 *Idid*

56 *Rajput*, n. 6, p. 19.

join the Congress.⁵⁷ But Nawab Vigar-ul-Mulk, the bonafide leader of the League was opposed to it. He forebade the Muslims to join the Congress, regarding it as suicidal step. He pointed out : "The Swaraj of the Congress is fatal to the Mussalmans. The disappearance of the British Government from or even any decrease of its influence in India would be a calamity for us."⁵⁸ But as the cry of "Islam in danger" was raising on, they ultimately decided to meet with the Congress. Fantastically enough, even the conservative Muslims favoured a *rapprochement* with the Congress in order to put stronger pressure on the British Government to modify its anti-Turkish policy. Khalid B. Sayeed correctly states that "if the annulment of partition of Bengal awakened Muslim fears, the attitude of Italy and the Balkan countries towards Turkey confirmed Muslim suspicion about the perennial hostility to Western Powers towards Muslims."⁵⁹

Aga Khan was also getting alarmed because the Muslim League had come considerably nearer the Congress goal of self-government for India when it passed the resolution for a system of self-government suitable to India in 1912. It was in these circumstances that the mere radical section of the Muslims found it easy to push the Muslim League nearer to the Congress. The liberal wing of the Muslim League was led by Jinnah and was becoming powerful. Even the conservative Muslims favoured a *rapprochement* with the Hindus in order to put pressure on the British Government at least to modify its anti-Turkish policy. The liberal wing of the Muslim League succeeded in persuading both the Congress and the Muslim League parties to hold their annual sessions in Bombay in 1915. Muhammad Ali, Shaukat Ali and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had all been interned under the Defence of India Act and their papers suppressed under the Press Act. This current bitter feeling against the British enabled Jinnah and Mazhar-ul-Haq to persuade the Muslim League to think in terms of

57 A.H. Albiruni, *Makers of Pakistan and Muslim India* (Lahore, 1950), p. 112.

58 Lal Bahadur, *The Muslim League* (Agra, 1954), p. 87.

59 Sayeed, n. 3, p. 38.

coming to a long-term settlement with the Congress. Many prominent Congress leaders including Sinha, Surendra Nath Banerji, Annie Besant, Pandit Malaviya, Sarojini Naidu and Gandhi were present at the League session in 1915 as guests. And a resolution was moved by Jinnah calling upon the All India Muslim League to appoint a committee entrusted with the task of formulating a scheme of reforms and authorized to confer with other political organizations.

Thus it was not Congress effort, but the Muslims' uneasiness about Turkey and the impact of the new ideas generated by the war which gave an opportunity to the pro-Congress elements within the League to push the Congress-League *rapprochement*. Consequently, between 1912 and 1922, the Muslim League moved closer to the Congress and there was increasing evidence of the two communities for the solution of their common problems.

The "divide and rule" policy of the British Government received a check and the two communities felt that they could jointly be protected only in unity. As a result, the Lucknow pact in 1916 came. Presiding over the 1916 session of the League at Lucknow, Jinnah pointed out as to how the League had outgrown its original communal outlook and stood abreast of the Congress. He hailed "the Hindu-Muslim rapprochement" as the first great sign of the birth of "United India".⁶⁰ Likewise, the League and the Congress continued to speak and act in unison during the subsequent five or six years. By the time Gandhi had come into the limelight, he supported the cause of League whole-heartedly. The Congress and League, both combined to put pressure on the authorities for a declaration of policy. They presented a joint address to the Secretary of State and demanded the complete self-government to India, and a place of equality for India with the dominions in any re-organization of the Empire. The Congress was whole-heartedly fighting for the cause of Muslims. Unfortunately it accepted the communal electorates. Edward Thompson comments: "This has in practice, tended to keep power in the hands of bigots,

⁶⁰ M.H. Saif, *Mohammad Ali Jinnah: A Political Study* (Lahore, 1945), pp. 573-4.

where if Moslem representatives were dependent on Hindus as well as Moslems' votes the men elected would know they had to consider and conciliate Hindu opinion as well as Moslem."⁶¹

As it is well known in 1916, both the Congress and the League again held their annual sessions at the same time and place this year at Lucknow. Jinnah was the main architect of the Lucknow Pact and was hailed as an ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity. Presiding over the session Jinnah observed :

Towards the Hindus our attitude should be of good-will and brotherly feelings. Cooperation in the cause of our motherland should be our guiding principle. India's real progress can only be achieved by a true understanding and harmonious relations between the two great sister communities....⁶²

It was obvious that Jinnah was at his best in composing constitutional differences and offering compromise solutions likely to be accepted by both sides. Congress conceded separate Muslim electorates and was even agreeable to their introduction in provinces like Punjab and Central Provinces where they had not existed before.⁶³

The Lucknow Pact showed that it was possible for middle class English educated Muslims and Hindus to arrive at an amicable settlement of Hindu-Muslim constitutional and political problems. Fazlul Haq presiding over the Muslim League at Delhi (1918) observed:

To me the future of Islam in India seems to be wrapped in gloom and anxiety. Every instance of a collapse of the Muslim powers of the world is bound to have an adverse influence on the political importance of our community in India.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Thompson, n. 21, p. 53.

⁶² Quoted in Aziz, n. 31, p. 40.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

A conference attended by Abdul Bari, Azad Sabhani, Ibrahim Sialkoti, Abdul Latif etc. was held which gave a new turn to Muslim politics. More significantly, Jinnah and Mahmudabad were withdrawn from the session because they were opposed to Khilafat.

Things went on its own way; the Khilafat movement started and the Khilafat conference launched the non-cooperation campaign. Thus was the idea of non-violent non-cooperation mooted tentatively for the first time at the Khilafat Conference in Delhi on the 23rd November, 1919.⁶³

The first Khilafat Conference was held at Delhi on the 23rd November, 1919, under the chairmanship of Fazlul Haq. Gandhiji, Motilal Nehru and Madan Mohan Malaviya were present. On the second day Gandhiji was voted to the chair. He spoke on the situation and suggested that the remedy for the wrongs of the Muslims was non-cooperation. In December, 1919, the Khilafat Committee and the Congress met at Amritsar. When the Committee met in Delhi on the 20th January, 1920, Gandhiji presented the programme of non cooperation which was accepted at the conference at Meerut a few days later.

The success of the non-cooperation programme depended upon the cooperation of the Khilafat Committee and the Congress. In the beginning the Khilafat movement was very largely a mass movement. It attracted Hindus and Muslims alike. The words "Khilafat" and "Swaraj" were on everybody's lips.⁶⁴

Hindu Muslim unity was at its height. But soon it started losing its enthusiastic tinge. The stage was set for a political upheaval which changed the face of the country. The immediate consequences of Gandhi's Khilafat movement seemed to be happened as—

- (1) The Indian National Congress which had become united in 1916, was split again. Those who disapproved

⁶³ *The Times* (London), 7th January, 1918.

⁶⁴ *Saveed*, n. 3, p. 50.

of the new programme of action seceded and founded the All India Liberal Federation.

- (2) For the next 25 years the Congress was an instrument of Gandhiji's will and its politics was overlaid with religious though not denominational fervour.
- (3) The Muslim League lost its popularity and Muslim politics passed under the domination of the religious leaders. Men like Jinnah, Wazir Hasan, Mahmudabad, Fazli Hussain, Muhammad Shafi, who had been the pillars of the Muslim League, were relegated to the background and the Khilafat Committee and the Jamiat-ul Ulema assumed the lead of Muslim politics.
- (4) The Hindu and Muslim masses were drawn into the political struggle in increasing numbers. Religious emotions were deeply stirred with the result that the followers of both became more actually conscious of their own individuality. Religion and politics were confused ⁶⁷

Here space does not permit us to describe the Khilafat movement and non-cooperation movement in detail. In brief, it is sufficient to know that both the schemes failed disastrously to achieve their objectives and Gandhi was put in bitter criticisms. Edward Thompson observes: "Mr. Gandhi took up by the greatest mistake of his career—the Khilafat agitation, on behalf of the Sultan of Turkey."⁶⁸ This simply worsened the relations between the Congress and the League. In 1921, the League President Mohani remarked that "in spite of the existing Hindu-Muslim unity, serious misunderstanding and suspicion persisted between the two communities."⁶⁹ As a sequel, series of riots occurred which swept away the unity, mutual understanding and goodwill which were built up in preceding decade. These communal riots became so common that the period from 1919 onwards can best be described as one of the continued civil wars. The Simon Commission counted 112 major com-

⁶⁷ Tarachand, n. 37, Vol. 3, p. 418.

⁶⁸ Thompson, n. 21., p. 53.

⁶⁹ Mehrotra, n. 25, p. 197.

munal riots in the sub-continent in the five years (1923-27).⁷⁰ The failure of the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements, affected to wreck the Government of India Act of 1919 where the dyarchy was first time introduced. From the very beginning it was detected by shrewd observers that the Hindu-Muslim unity as stressed by Khilafat leaders and Gandhiji was not based on firm foundations. The critics estimated that the Muslims were not so much fighting for freedom for India as they were fighting for the maintenance of the Khilafat in Turkey whereas for Gandhi the Khilafat was a weapon which he could use to accelerate India's advance towards *Swaraj*.⁷¹

Thus the Khilafat movement was deprived of its main motive and was bound to collapse. According to F. Rahman, "it was, perhaps more semi-consciously, a bid for finding Muslim security in a future independent India over against a non-Muslim majority."⁷²

In 1927, as provided in the Act of 1919, the British Government appointed the "Simon Commission" under Sir John Simon to study the Indian problems in India. But it faced opposition from every class and was greeted with the slogan "Simon go back". The Simon Commission split the League into two. One section by Jinnah was in favour of boycotting the Commission. The other group led by Shafi wanted to cooperate with the Commission. The so-called Jinnah League thus wanted to cooperate with the Congress. Even before the appointment of the Simon Commission in November 1927, the League and the Congress had, mainly by the effort of Jinnah, started drawing closer to each other once again. In early 1927, Jinnah declared that the Muslims were ready to give up the "separate electorate". The Congress cordially welcomed the proposal but in the meantime a storm of vehement protests came from Muslims in all parts of India. This made Jinnah hold back. Once again the hindrance came in the way of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Before we enter into the subject matter of the thesis, we must

70 Phillips, n. 11, p. 323.

71 Sayeed, n. 3, p. 55.

72 *ibid.*

think over the background of the relations between the Congress and the Muslims.

Barring the question of Indian freedom no problem has more actively and persistently engaged the attention of the Congress than this communal one. The Congress at its best tried to find the solution, first on the basis of pure nationalism and if this proved impracticable, on the basis of appeasement of the Muslims. Whenever it opposed the demands or desires of the Muslim community, it did so in the name of nationalism and for the sake of national unity.

The Congress in the "name of nationality" did do whatever it could do within its limitations for the communal settlement, in spite of the fact that Muslim leaders seemed arrogant to have their separate distance. They from the very beginning called themselves a separate nation. To quote F.K. Khan Durrani :

In spite of their centuries of close association and sympathetic intercourse the Hindus and the Muslims remained separate... They were two nationalities, so utterly different indeed that if "at any time the sentiment", which the political philosopher calls national consciousness, were to awaken in them and become dynamic they could not but react differently; they could not but grow into separate nations...⁷³

Rajendra Prasad quotes Durrani and asserts the same view that the Muslims originally constituted a separate nation and needed a separate state.⁷⁴ He writes that "from 1857 onwards the Hindus and the Muslims never felt as one people".⁷⁵ The statement is somehow true. To prove this fact some examples should be put here chronologically as to how time and again the eminent persons suggested and forecast for the division of India.

As has been mentioned above, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the first person to emphasize the fact that India was a continent

⁷³ Durrani, n. 4.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

rather than a country. As early as 1867 he clearly foretold the separation of the two nations—Hindus and Muslims.⁷⁶

Abdul Halim Sharar, an eminent Muslim writer on the 23rd August, 1890 wrote : "...it would be wise to partition India into Hindu and Muslim provinces and exchange the population."⁷⁷ In 1899, Theodore Morrison proposed for the division of India on communal basis. Again in 1917 it was proclaimed in the Conference of Socialist International. In April 1921, Muhammed Qadir Bilgrami published an open letter to Gandhiji advocating the division of India. In the same year Maulana Hasrat Mohani in the League session expressed his feelings in favour of the separation of Muslims from Hindus. Likewise some Hindu leaders named Bhai Parmanand in 1923 and Lala Lajpat Rai propounded the Hindu Muslim unity as an unthinkable plan.

But in spite of all these possibilities of the Muslims' separatist tendency, efforts for unity were continued at its best. If some stones were left unturned, it was due to certain limitations. The chapters will deal with some of the original sources that will help to study the circumstances, policy steps and limitations of the Indian National Congress, the reactions and response of the Muslims and the Muslim leaders, the criticism, and last but not the least, the justification of the events.

It is also the point of observance that by now the Muslims, who were politically weak and disorganized till 1930, gained strength within ten years to claim for a separate nation. Was Muslim nationalism a natural growth, a widespread movement or was it a deliberate creation of the Muslim League? How and why Jinnah, a convinced advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity for most of his political career, could become the foremost advocate of Hindu-Muslim separation?⁷⁸ What was the crucial point of this change?

Though attempts for reconciliation continued, on the 21st November, 1924 an All Parties Conference met at Bombay at the instance of Muhammad Ali, the Congress President. Jinnah-

76 Pizzadi, n. 1, "Introduction".

77 *Ibid*.

78 Philips, n. 11, p. 32.

addressed the gathering and after reviewing the history of the Lucknow Pact, he appealed to the Hindus to agree to the Muslim claims.

About Jinnah becoming anti-Congress, Tarachand says that as ill-luck would have it, when Jinnah was advocating nationalism, the Swaraj Party was opposing his candidature to the Imperial Legislative Assembly. Later, however, better counsels prevailed and the swarajist candidate was withdrawn.⁷⁹

Scholars may differ in suggesting the exact date or year of the difference between the Congress and the Muslim leaders of the League. Whatever they may suggest, the Nehru Report (1928) seems to be more suggestive in the parting of the ways. Thus it is obvious that from 1928 the clear difference started.

⁷⁹ Tarachand, n. 37, vol. 4, p. 21.

Year of Estrangement—1928

Four years before 1928, the year 1924 itself was a blow of hot and cold. As Tarachand summons:

.. eruption of terrorism in Bengal, infiltration of communalism, Cawnpore conspiracy, abolition of Khilafat, heated debates in the legislatures, tussels between official benches and nationalists, increase of communal tensions and the outbreak of numerous riots all over India.¹

However, as history says, attempts for the communal rapprochement continued from all sides. A unity conference was held under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru. Three hundred delegates attended the conference. The resolution expressed utmost desire for unity and struggle for full freedom from the British raj. In the same year, an All Parties Conference met at Bombay at the instance of Muhammad Ali, the Congress President. Jinnah addressed the gathering and appealed to the Hindus to agree to the Muslim claims that in Bengal and Punjab, the Muslim representatives should not be in minority, and that the question of the Muslim's share in the

¹ Tarachand *History of the Freedom Movement in India* (Delhi, 1972), vol. 4, p. 19.

services should be separately decided.² But it failed to draw a right conclusion. Although Jinnah convened the Muslim League meeting at Bombay at the same time when the Congress had met at Belgaum, he in the meantime clarified his stand and expressed his desire to unite and consolidate Muslim mass but at the same time he desired to bring about a friendly understanding in Punjab in particular, and a complete settlement between the Hindus and Muslims as was done in 1916. He assured:

The League is not in any way going to adopt a policy or programme which will, in the least degree, as far as I can judge, be antagonistic to the Indian National Congress... On the contrary, I believe it will proceed on lines which are best calculated to further general national interests, not forgetting the interests of the Muslim community.³

Moreover, Jinnah as chairman of the reception committee proclaimed "No power on earth can dare obstruct our demand for Swaraj provided the Hindus and Muslims become sincerely united."⁴

But all these assurances and proclamations seemed to have failed in preceding years and the gulf between Congress and the Muslim League widened.

Differences also arose between Gandhiji and the Khilafat leaders, the Ali Brothers, on the question of the responsibility for Kohat riots.⁵ Gandhiji and Shaukat Ali conducted an enquiry at Rawalpindi into the riots and issued separate statements. They differed in their statements. The differences created differences. Nevertheless, the All India Hindu Mahasabha held two sessions at Calcutta and Kanpur on the 11th April, 1923 and 29th December, 1925 respectively. Lajpat Rai presided over the first session. He condemned the Lucknow Pact and declared it a mistake on the part of Congress. He opposed any scheme of communal representation and advocated a

² *Ibid* p. 20

³ *Ibid*, p. 21.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ *Ibid*. See also *Young India*, 26 March 1925.

"democratic raj in which the Hindus, Muslims and the other communities of India may participate as Indians and not as followers of any particular religion."⁶

Muslim League was on the other extreme. The Muslim League met at Aligarh on the 30th December, 1925 under the chairmanship of Abdur Rahim, a former judge of the Madras High Court. He attacked the Hindus' attitude towards the Muslim community.

To be more shocking, in the same year Swami Shradhanand was murdered by a young Muslim fanatic. This wiped out all the possibilities of the rapprochement between the two communities.

Consequently besides the numerous attempts to have communal harmony between 1924, and 1929, viz. the unity conference of Delhi in September, 1924, and the setting up of a Unity Panchayat (Committee), the All Parties Conference at Bombay in November, 1924, the unity conference organised by the Congress in 1927, and the All Parties Conference in March and May, 1928 at Delhi, the relations between the Congress and Muslims worsened to be worst in the future.⁷

Therefore, when the position of Congress was swinging between the two extremes, the Muslims' views and the Hindus' views, it was not an easy game for the Nehru Committee to frame a Constitution for India.

From 1928 onwards, the Indian National Congress enters into a phase of estrangement. Since then the relation between the Congress and Muslims takes a clear and bitter turn. This year is the landmark of the history that Congress for the first time took a solid and firm step to solve the communal problem. But tragically enough, more it tried for rapprochement, the more it increased the tension. Coatsman remarks: "From 1928 there is quite definitely a new model of Hindu-Muslim antagonism...It is something deeper, more embracing in its objectives than the old traditional semi-instinctive antagonism."⁸

Even the end of 1927 was marked as a bit sensational. The political goal of *swaraj* was changed to that of complete inde-

6 N N. Mitra, *Indian Annual Register* (Calcutta, 1925), vol. 1, p. 378

7 Tarachand, n. 1, p. 21.

8 J. Coatsman, *Years of Delay* (London, 1912), p. 216.

pendence. A small but aggressive socialist circle was organized within the Congress. In spite of all these changes Hindu-Muslim relations had worsened. Riots spread at the slightest provocation. The Government had lost control.

As the prospect of Swaraj drew nearer the Muslims began to devote their attention more anxiously to a clear definition and proper security of their position in a future self-governing India. To Gandhi, the settlement with the Muslims was a must for Indian freedom. He viewed that without ending the home dispute, there was no hope of getting anything from the British. He, therefore, persuaded the Congress to do accordingly.

In the beginning Jinnah too seemed to be interested in having compromise between the Muslim League and the Congress on the condition that the Congress would accept his Delhi proposal.⁹ Here it is necessary to go into the back history to understand the circumstances properly. The Gauhati session of the Indian National Congress met in December, 1926 in the shadow of a great tragedy. (Swami Shradhanand was murdered in his sick bed by a Muslim fanatic).¹⁰ The differences and conflicts between Hindus and Muslims were at their height. The Congress passed a resolution calling upon "the Working Committee to take immediate steps in consultation with Hindu and Muslim leaders to devise measures for the removal of the present deplorable differences between Hindus and Muslims and submit their report to the All India Congress Committee not later than the 31st March, 1927".¹¹ In compliance with these directions the Working Committee and the Congress President for the year held several informal conferences with Hindu and Muslim leaders and members of the Central Legislature. As an effect, on 20th March, 1927 some prominent Muslim leaders met together in Delhi and put forward certain proposals on the Hindu-Muslim problem for acceptance of the Hindus and the

9 M. Noman, *Muslim India, Rise and Growth of the All India Muslim League* (Allahabad, 1942), pp. 244-5.

10 Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided* (Bombay, 1946), p. 129.

11 Sadiq Ali, ed., *Resolutions, Congress and the Minorities* (Allahabad 1947), p. 99.

country. Certain Muslim representatives met at Delhi on the 20th March, 1927 and put forward some proposals declaring that—

Whether in the forthcoming revision of the Indian Constitution elections to the legislative bodies should be through joint or separate electorates, has been the subject of anxious discussion among Hindu and Musalman leaders in Delhi. The Hindu members of the Congress party and the Nationalist party having already decided in favour of only a joint electorate with the reservation of seats to Mohamedans, either on the basis of the Lucknow pact or the existing population of each province, the Mohamedans met in informal conference today under the Presidentship of Mr. Jinnah, who had issued the invitations to representative Mohamedans in all parts of India.¹²

According to Jinnah, it was unanimously resolved that the Muslims should accept a settlement on the basis of the following proposals so far as representation in the various legislatures in any future scheme of constitution was concerned:

- (i) Sind was made into a separate province.
- (ii) The N.W.F. Province and Baluchistan were treated on the same footing as the other provinces.
- (iii) In Punjab and Bengal the proportion of representation was in accordance with the population.¹³

Jinnah writes;

If this is agreed to, Mohamedans are prepared to accept a joint electorate in all provinces so constituted and are further willing to make to Hindu minorities in Sind, Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province the same concessions that Hindu majorities in other provinces are prepared to make to Mohamedan minorities.¹⁴

¹² Jinnah's *History of the Origin of Fourteen Points* (Bombay, n.d.) p. 3.

¹³ *IBL*, p. 4.

¹⁴ *IBL*.

The names of the participants who attended the conference are as follows:

- (1) M.A. Jinnah
- (2) Maharaja of Mahmudabad
- (3) Sir Muhammed Shafi
- (4) Mohammed Ali
- (5) Dr. Ansari
- (6) Mohamed Yakub
- (7) Nawab Mohamed Ismail
- (8) Lieut. Sardar Mohamed Nawaz Khan
- (9) Suhrawardi
- (10) Shah Nawaz
- (11) Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan
- (12) Farooki
- (13) Abdul Rahman
- (14) Sir Abdul Qauyum
- (15) Shah Mohamed Zabair
- (16) Syed Ahmed Shah
- (17) Moulis Syed Murtaza
- (18) Mohammed Shafee Daoodi
- (19) Abdul Aziz
- (20) Abdul Matin Chaudhari
- (21) Mirza Abdul Qadir
- (22) Syed Abdul Jabbar
- (23) Ebtashmuddin
- (24) Syed Abdul Rahim
- (25) Anwar-u-Azim
- (26) Dr. Hyder
- (27) Ariff
- (28) Jafaz Hussain
- (29) Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan¹⁵

The proposals were communicated to the Congress and the Congress Working Committee the very next day passed a resolution appreciating the decision of the Muslim Conference]to accept joint electorates and trusting that a satisfactory settle-

ment would be arrived at on the basis of these proposals. A sub-committee was constituted to confer with Hindu and Muslim leaders. In its next meeting in May, 1927, the Congress passed its resolution on the basis of the Muslim proposals and dealt with some other matters also. Replying to the Delhi proposals, the Congress resolution suggested, on behalf of the Hindu leaders, that Sind should not be separated on communal grounds but on general grounds applicable to all provinces. Next, the Madras Congress Committee considered the Hindu-Muslim question in its entirety and passed a lengthy resolution, dealing with both political, religious and other rights on the general line. Immediately after passing a resolution on the Swaraj constitution the Congress Working Committee passed resolutions "appreciating the earnestness of the distinguished Muslim members who have put forward the scheme for the settlement of outstanding differences between the Hindu and Muslim communities,"¹⁶ and suggesting that "the various items of the proposed settlement should be discussed at an early date by the duly elected representatives of the communities in such a spirit of genuine co-operation as will lead to complete agreement."¹⁷

The response made by the Congress to the "Delhi Proposals" were considered by the session of the All India Muslim League at Calcutta in December, 1927, and the following resolution was passed by the League:

The All India Muslim League authorises its Council to appoint a sub-committee to confer with the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress and such other organisations as they think proper for the purpose of drafting a constitution for India in which the interests of the Muslim community will be safeguarded having regard to the following proposals which the League approves and adopts and subsequently take part in the National Convention which is going to take place in Delhi

16 Report, *All Parties Conference*, 1928 (Allahabad, 1928), pp. 21, 22.

17 *Ibid.*

in March next as suggested by the Congress.¹⁸

The proposals are:

- (1) that Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency and constituted into a separate province;
- (2) that reforms should be introduced in the N.W.F. province and in Baluchistan on the same footing as in other provinces;
- (3) that in the present circumstances the representation of Muslims in the different legislatures of the country through separate Muslim electorates is inevitable;
- (4) that Muslims will not accept any scheme involving the surrender of this valued right unless and until Sind is actually made a separate province and reforms aforesaid are actually introduced in the N.W.F. and Baluchistan provinces and that when these requirements are fully satisfied, Muslims will be prepared to abandon separate electorates in favour of joint electorates with reservation of seats fixed on the basis of the population of the different communities subject to what is related hereinafter;
- (5) that in Sind, Baluchistan and N.W.F. Province, the Muslim majority should make the same concession in regard to the proportion of seats reserved to the Hindu minority that Hindu majorities in other provinces would make to Muslim minorities over and above the proportion of population of the provinces which shall be the minimum basis.
- (6) In the Central Legislature, the Muslim representation shall not be less than one-third.¹⁹

The League further resolves—

- (a) that in the future constitution of India, liberty of conscience shall be guaranteed, and no legislature, Central

¹⁸ *Jinnah*, n. 12, p. 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

or Provincial, shall have power to make any laws interfering with the liberty of conscience; and

- (b) that no bill, resolution, motion or amendment regarding inter-communal matters shall be moved, discussed or passed in any legislature, Central or Provincial, if a three-fourth majority of the members of the community affected thereby in that legislature, oppose the introduction, discussion or passing of such bill, the resolution, motion or amendment.²⁰

Here it would not be irrelevant to say that according to Rajendra Prasad this plan for the communal settlement was the result of the humiliation heaped on Indians by the appointment of the Simon Commission and a challenge thrown out by Lord Birkenhead to India to produce a constitution acceptable to all. Whatever the cause may be the Working Committee of the Congress issued invitations to a large number of organizations for having the All Parties Conference. Some of them might be mentioned as under:

- (1) National Liberal Federation
- (2) Hindu Mahasabha
- (3) All India Muslim League
- (4) Central Khilafat Committee
- (5) Central Sikh League
- (6) South Indian Liberal Federation
- (7) All India Trade Union Congress
- (8) General Council of all Burmese Associations
- (9) Home Rule League
- (10) Republican League
- (11) Independent Party in the Assembly
- (12) Nationalist Party in the Assembly
- (13) Indian States Subjects Conference
- (14) Indian States People's Conference
- (15) Anglo Indian Associates
- (16) Indian Association of Calcutta
- (17) Parsi Central Association

- (18) Parsi Panchayat
- (19) All India Conference of Indian Christians
- (20) Southern India Chamber of Commerce
- (21) Dravida Mahajana Sabha etc.

Those who responded met at Delhi. The Jinnah group of the League was one amongst them. These organizations sent their representatives to the conference which held its first meeting on 12th February, 1928. The conference continued its meetings till 22nd February, 1928. The first question discussed by the conference was the aim, objective and the structure of the Constitution of India. The second question was about the re-distribution of the provinces, the electorates and reservations of the seats. As the Conference was too large to make any decision, on 22nd February, 1928, it appointed a committee which was to submit its report on the following subjects : Whether the Constitution should be bicameral or unicameral, franchise, declaration of rights, rights of labour and peasantry and Indian States. Thereafter the Conference adjourned. The Committee presented its report and the Conference met again in March, 1928. Meanwhile the Council of Muslim League had met and expressed its disapproval of the resolutions of the All Parties Conference. As it is well known, the All India Muslim League had appointed a committee to represent the League at the All Parties Conference, but as no agreement was reached, the Council of the All India Muslim League met at Delhi and passed the following resolution:

The Council of the All India Muslim League is of opinion that the draft proposals adopted at the All Parties Conference called by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress are not in conformity with the resolutions of the All India Muslim League. The Council further regrets that the Hindu Mahasabha has practically rejected the Muslim League proposals.²¹

However, the Council appointed a committee of some League members for the purpose of conferring with the representatives of

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

other organisations in accordance with the past resolution of the League. This resolution of the Muslim League Council placed a difficulty before the Congress. It was found that there was no agreement between the representatives of the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha on the separation of Sind and the reservation of seats for the majorities. The conference again adjourned till 19th May, 1928. Again in May the situation was not favourable. The communal organizations had drifted further apart and each of them had hardened in its attitude. At last it was thought that the committee had to be a small one if it was to work properly. Ultimately the All Parties Conference appointed a final committee at its meeting held in Bombay on the 19th May, 1928 passing the resolution as follows:

This meeting resolves that a committee consisting of Pandit Motilal Nehru, as Chairman, Sir Tej Bahadur Sepru, Sir Ali Imam, *Syt. Subhash Chandra Bose, Syt. Madhao Rao Aney, Syt. M.R. Jayakar, Syt. N.M. Joshi and Sardar Mangal Singh* be appointed to consider and determine the principles of the constitution for India before first July next. ²²

Of the ten members of the committee elected by the Conference, M.R. Jayakar expressed his inability to act on it. N. M. Joshi stated that he could take part only when the rights of labour were being considered. As a matter of fact, he was unable to be present at any sitting of the committee. Owing to ill health, Sir Ali Imam could only attend one sitting and his presence at that sitting was most helpful.

Motilal Nehru, *Chairman of the Committee*, submitted the report formally on the 10th August, 1928 at Allahabad, attaching a letter to M. A. Ansari, President, All Parties Conference, requesting him to consider and determine the principles of the Constitution for India.²³ The Committee was directed by a resolution passed on 19th May 1928:

²² All Parties Conference, n. 16.

²³ *I. M.*, p. 17.

This Committee shall give the fullest consideration to the resolution of the Madras Congress on Communal Unity in confirmation with those passed by the Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim League, the Sikh League and the other political organisations represented at the All Parties Conference at Delhi and the suggestions that may hereafter be received by it; the Committee will give due weight to the recommendations made by the various sub-committees of the All Parties Conference at Delhi.²⁴

Therefore, the Committee had to be very careful about its report and principles. While the famous Delhi proposals by the Muslim League had created a difficulty, the Congress Working Committee met in Bombay in May, 1927, and passed a resolution on the Hindu-Muslim question. This resolution was based on the Muslim proposals. The Congress further passed an important resolution on the *swaraj* constitution which needs to be quoted here:

...Congress authorises the Working Committee which shall have power to co-opt, to confer with similar committees to be appointed by other organisations, political, labour, commercial and communal, in the country and to draft a swaraj constitution for India on the basis of a Declaration of Rights, and to place the same for consideration and approval before a special convention to be convened in Delhi not later than March next, consisting of the All India Congress Committee and the leaders and representatives of the other organisations above-mentioned and the elected members of the Central and Provincial legislatures.²⁵

Immediately after this, the annual session of the Liberal Federation held in Bombay, passed resolutions "cordially" appreciating the earnestness of the distinguished Muslim members who had put forward the scheme for the settlement of outstanding differences between the Hindu and Muslim communities. But, as-

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

mentioned above, the Muslim League differed on certain points and passed its resolution disapproving the resolutions of the All Parties Conference.

At last when the All Parties Conference met on 19th May, 1928 in Bombay the situation was quite abnormal. The communal organizations had drifted further apart and each of them had hardened in its attitude and was not prepared to change or modify it. Then it was thought that for having proper result of the committee a small body was necessary. The present committee was appointed from this point of view.²⁴

There were several problems before the committee because it was going to frame the first federal Constitution of India framed by the Indians only. In brief, it had to deal with political, economic as well as the communal aspects of the country. Besides the other problems, the committee carefully dealt with the communal problem of India. According to the data collected by the committee, these two communities—the Hindus and Muslims—formed 90 per cent of the total population of India and Burma. The proportion at the 1921 census was as follows:

Hindus	65.9 per cent
Muslims	24.1 per cent
Buddhists (chiefly in Burma)	4.6 per cent
Christians	1.2 per cent
Sikhs	1.0 per cent
Jains	0.2 per cent
Others	0.2 per cent

A study of the figures of previous census reports shows that whilst Hindus and Jains had been gradually decreasing, all the other communities had increased their numbers from census to census. The increase in the case of Muslims had not been very high but it had been continuous. The following percentage since 1881 will show the relative numbers of Hindus and Muslims at different periods:

Year	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	
Hindus	72.0	70.1	68.3	66.9	65.9	= 6.1 per cent
Muslims	22.6	22.4	23.2	23.5	24.1	= 1.5 per cent

Thus taking the Muslims separately they found that they had increased by 3.1 per cent during the last decade. The distribution of the Muslim population was such that except in the Frontier Provinces in the North West and in Bengal and Panjab, they formed a small minority everywhere. Their highest minority was in the United Provinces but even there it was less than 15 per cent. In Punjab the Muslims were 55.3 per cent and in Bengal they were 54.0 per cent. In Sind, they were 73.4 per cent and in Baluchistan and the N.W.F. Provinces they formed an overwhelming strong position.

Therefore, after having a thorough study of the population of Hindus and Muslims, the committee stated that the Muslim community was strong enough to look after itself and required no special protection or spoon feeding. The committee further went on to point out that if communal protection was necessary for any group in India, it was not for the major communities—the Hindus and the Muslims. It might have been necessary for the small communities which together formed 10 per cent of the total population. Having the above mentioned ideas in mind, the committee framed a settlement of the communal problem at its best. It dealt with the vital issues of the communal problem such as the question of electorates, the reservation of seats, the separation of Sind and the form of the government in the N.W.F. Province and Baluchistan.

So far as the separate electorates were concerned, the committee declared it as thoroughly unjustified for the growth of a national spirit and found it equally worse for a minority community. The committee declared: "We can only have joint or united electorates."¹⁷ The report said :

We find however that there has been a tendency amongst the Muslims to consider them as a "valued privilege", although a considerable section are prepared to give them up in consideration for some other things. Everybody knows that separate electorates are bad for the growth of a national spirit, but everybody perhaps does not realise equally well that separate electorates are still worse for a minority community...Under separate electorates therefore the chances are that the minority will always have to face a hostile majority which can always, by sheer force of numbers, override the wishes of the minority...Separate electorates must therefore be discarded completely as a condition precedent to any rational system of representation. We can only have joint or mixed electorates.²⁸

Regarding the form of government in the N.W.F. Province and in Baluchistan, the committee was of the opinion that the status of these areas must be made the same as that of other provinces.

On the question of separation of Sind and Bombay, the committee stated on behalf of the Hindus in Sind and elsewhere that it was strongly opposed to the creation of "communal" provinces. According to it, the communal ground for the separation of Sind was not justified even and it was anti-national.

Now coming to the reservation of seats, it is observed that the committee had to face a great menace to its decision. Each and every party was adamant of getting the lion's share. Muslims were insistent on the reservation of seats for the Muslim majorities in Punjab and Bengal, while the Hindu Mahasabha and Sikh League strongly opposed this. However, the committee tried its best to have a better solution that may satisfy all. From this point of view it considered various proposals such as :

- (a) Reservation of seats on population basis for majorities as well as minorities.
- (b) Part reservation for majorities with freedom to contest

other seats.

(c) *Proportional representation.*

(d) Amalgamation of the Punjab and N.W.F. Province with no reservation of seats.

(e) No reservation, but special safeguards in the constitution for educational and economic advance of backward communities.

For having an informal discussion on the above mentioned proposals the committee invited the representatives of all prominent parties but as few of them did not respond, Sardar Mangal Singh persuaded the committee to decide itself.

No agreement could be reached on the first proposals, but decisions were taken on the remaining four. The second one, that was part reservation, after a long discussion was declared ineffective and the committee came to the third one, the proportional representation. This proposal attracted the members and they called it the only rational and just way of meeting the fears and claims of various communities. They hoped that this method would in future be the solution of their problem. But this was not very much practicable at the present situation.

At last they came to the reservation of seats on the basis of population, both majority and minority. Here we might mention it briefly.

Reservation for Majority

Although the reservation of seats for majorities had been fiercely opposed on both grounds—theory and fact—yet the question stood in the provinces of Punjab and Bengal, where the Muslims were in a slight majority over all others. Very amazingly, it had not been claimed for any other majority in any province. Though this method was opposite to the principle of a responsible government, yet the committee considered it as a special case.

Punjab

The population of Punjab (British territory) at the 1921

census was as follows:

Muslims	11,444,321	55.3 per cent
Hindus	6,579,260	31.8 per cent
Sikhs	2,294,207	11.1 per cent
Others (mainly Christians)	367,236	1.8 per cent
Total	20,685,024	100.0 per cent

There were 29 districts in all. The committee divided it into four zones :

- (i) There were 15 districts in the overwhelmingly Muslim zone. The percentage of them was nearly 91 per cent ; in 9 districts it was 71 or over, and in three 63.3, 61.9 and 60.7 per cent. The last three districts were included in this zone. Comparing the Muslims to the Hindu and Sikh population, the Hindus were serially 16.0 per cent, 19.5 per cent, 18.1 per cent and the Sikhs were 15.9 per cent, 8.0 per cent and 16.4 per cent. It should be remembered that the non-Muslim minority in all these districts consisted not of one group but of several communities like Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and others.
- (ii) There were two districts (Lahore and Gurudaspur) which were called the pre-dominantly Muslim zones. Here the Muslims were larger in number than Hindus and Sikh combined together. In Lahore Muslims were *57.3 per cent of the total population*.
- (iii) There were three districts where the Muslims were in *great majority*.
- (iv) There were nine districts which formed a strong Hindu-Sikh zone.

Thus the committee viewed that the Muslims were certain of getting 47.3 per cent seats, and they stood a good chance of capturing the majority of at least seats. As such, they were assured of a clear majority in the legislature.

Bengal

It is not possible to discuss the position of Bengal in detail. Therefore, only a brief summary is given here :

(The population figures according to 1921 census)

Muslims	25,210,802	54.0%
Hindus	20,203,527	43.3%
Others (chiefly tribal and Christians)	1,281,207	2.7%
<hr/>		
Total	46,695,536	100.0%
<hr/>		

Here also the zones were likely to be similar to those of Punjab. The Muslims were assured of 60 per cent in the legislature. Thus, after a minute observation of the Muslim position in the above-mentioned provinces, it was analysed that the Muslims' fears in Bengal and Punjab were largely imaginary. These fears were based on the superior economic and educational standards of the Hindus and Sikhs. But this did not matter because the superiority did not help the Hindus in Bengal at the District Board elections as the elections were highly favourable to the Muslims.²⁹

Now, we come to the other special arrangements for Muslims, viz. the reservation for Muslim minority in proportion to population. As it was natural, the Muslim representatives argued for giving 10 per cent seats to Muslims in the Central Legislature. Though the committee was feeling compelled by force of circumstances to give way, it decided to solve the problem as fairly as possible. Consequently, the Muslim minorities were given special seats in the Uttar Pradesh.

On the question of other non-Muslim minorities, the committee plainly declared that any protection by way of reservation was not necessary or desirable for them. Further, the-

committee stated while justifying its aim and position that it recommended such protection to Muslim minorities under very special circumstances and for a limited period only. At the same time the committee appealed to the Muslims to make up their minds to do without reservation from the beginning. On the communal protection the report stated :

A new-comer to India looking at these figures and at the strength of the Muslim community, would probably imagine that it was *strong enough to look after itself and required no special protection or spoon feeding*. If communal protection was necessary for any group in India it was not for the two major communities—the Hindus and the Muslims.³⁰

At the same time the report justified the proposal of the Muslim leaders for the domination of Muslims in several provinces so that they might face the fear of Hindu majority. Similarly, the Hindus also demanded their safeguard in certain Muslim-dominated provinces like Sind, Baluchistan etc.

With these points in view, the report provided several articles in the 'Declaration of Rights' giving the fullest liberty of conscience and religion to each individual. It considered also a proposal to create communal councils to protect the cultural interests of each considerable community. The communal council, in brief, could be entrusted with certain works to recommend the institutions for scholarships and other grants.

At least the report appealed to both the communities to "live and let live".³¹

Finally, all the communal considerations were fully discussed in an informal conference and some important resolutions were passed in this context. Some relevant parts of the resolutions are as follows :

We are unanimously opposed to the reservation of seats in the legislatures either for majorities or minorities and we recommend that no such reservation should be provided for

³⁰ *ILL*, p. 28.

³¹ *ILL*, p. 29.

in the Constitution. But if this recommendation is not accepted and an agreement can be aimed at only on a reservation of seats on the population basis we recommend that such reservation be made for majorities or minorities without any weightage.³²

Again, Sardar Mangal Singh's opinion is quoted here :

....If the agreement can only be reached by reservation of seats I will recommend that the case of the Sikhs be considered as that of an important minority and adequate and effective representation, far in excess of their numerical strength be given to them in Punjab on the basis adopted for Muslim minorities under the Lucknow Pact in Bihar and other provinces...³³

At last, the only alternative to the proposals and recommendations of the informal conference was found that there would be no reservation for any minorities including Muslims, in any legislature.

But at the same time the committee considered the dissatisfaction of the Muslims and reminded them that the Muslims were enjoying considerable weightage in every province.³⁴ Further, the committee cleared its stand that "endless complications will arise if we recommend reservation for all minorities".³⁵

This final report was not acceptable to the Muslims and, therefore, the conference ordered the committee to submit a supplementary report of its decisions. The committee submitted its supplementary report by the end of 1928. In its supplementary report the Nehru Committee noted Aga Khan's observations on the indispensability of British rule in India. The most important question which engaged the attention of the original committee and was discussed at length in the main report

32 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Ibid.*, p. 57.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 58.

was the question of reservation of seats for Muslim majority in Panjab and Bengal.

Moreover, great grievances were made by some Muslim leaders against the main report for not allowing the continuance of the weightage at that time enjoyed by the community in provinces where it was in minority.³⁶

The Committee again dealt with the communal aspects along with other aspects of the report and with amendments it presented its recommendations as follows:

- (1) The question of the separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency has been settled by mutual agreement which was adopted by the Lucknow Conference in resolution No. 4, vide page 162.

x

x

x

- (4) For Baluchistan the clause will now read as follows:
The N.W.F. Province, Baluchistan and all newly formed provinces by separation from other provinces, shall have the same form of government as the other provinces in India.
- (5) The question of language was amended as:
Provided that adequate provision shall be made by the state for imparting public instruction in primary schools to the children of members of minorities of considerable strength in the population through the medium of their own language and in such script as is in vogue among them.
- (6) The report also adds two amendments in the original recommendations:
 - (a) The language of the Commonwealth shall be Hindustani which may be written either in Nagri or in Urdu character. The use of English language shall be permitted.
 - (b) In provinces the principal language of a province shall be the official language of that province.

The use of Hindustani and English shall be permitted.³⁷

The last recommendation was for the safeguard of interests and rights of the various minorities in the Central Legislature with regard to the amendment of the constitution where considerable amendments were made.

Even for the reservation of seats, the committee proved its observations by showing the result of the District Board elections in Bengal. The committee presented also the date of Punjab District Board election results where in spite of the majority of the non-Muslim voters, the Muslims had captured 408 seats out of a total of 815 seats which were just more than 50 per cent.³⁸ In this report the committee tried to adjust with the Muslim grievances at its best. It agreed with the Muslim demands for the separation of Sind from Bombay and for raising the North-West Frontier Province status to that of other provinces. It substituted adult and universal franchise for separate representation and fixed communal quotas for legislatures of provinces with negligible Muslim minorities and for the North-West Frontier Province with an overwhelming Muslim preponderance. It ruled out reservation of seats for Panjab and Bengal. These provinces were intended to become, so to speak, an open electoral field. With the supplementary submission of its report, the committee summed up:

It will be seen from the above that we have gone a very long way, to meet the Muslim demand. The only point upon which we are sorry we cannot see eye to eye with them is the question of reservation for them of 1/3rd of the total number of seats in the central legislature... We may point out that our recommendations in this respect are more favourable to Muslims . . .³⁹

The appeal, however, was not considered.

When the Nehru Report was published towards the end of

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

39 *Ibid.*

1928, it was supported by a few liberal Muslims, like the Raja of Mahmudabad and Sir Ali Imam, and a few Congress Muslims like Azad and Ansari. Although Jinnah and his followers were very critical of the Report on so many points, yet they worked for a *rapprochement* between the Congress and the Muslims. The report received wide publicity and was discussed at conventions, conferences and rallies. Mahatma Gandhi publicly appreciated the achievements of the report and wired his warmest congratulations to Motilal Nehru.

The Muslims had otherwise their own reactions. They began to feel that they had been cheated of their legitimate rights and delivered to the leviation of the majority. Jinnah writes: "The basic principles of the communal settlement embodied in the *Nehru Report* are contrary to those on which Muslim opinion had hitherto expressed its willingness to come to an agreement."⁴⁰ It was really shocking for the future of the communal rapprochement in India that the Muslims did not regard the report as just. Jinnah adds:

The Nehru Report proposal can, therefore, at best be treated only as counter Hindu proposals to the Muslim proposals. And as there is no agreement reached it is now for the All India Muslim League to take such action or adopt such course as the League may think proper in the best interests of the community and the country.⁴¹

Aga Khan viewed the proceedings of the All Parties Convention with "ill-conceived distaste."⁴² He invented that the Muslims of India were not a community but "in a special sense a nation".⁴³ The Sikhs in particular, and Muslims and other minorities in general, expressed dissatisfaction over one or the other aspect of the solution proposed in the Nehru Report. The Muslims' condemnation was based on two grounds: they wanted separate electorates to be retained, and they insisted that the future constitution of India should be federal and not

⁴⁰ *Jinnah*, n. 12, pp. 12 ff.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² V.B. Kulkarni, *India and Pakistan* (Bombay, 1973), n. 337

⁴³ *Ibid.*

unitary with a weak centre for minimum common interests and utmost autonomy for the provinces. The Khilafat leaders attacked the Nehru Report for an additional reason. They were not prepared to accept the idea of dominion status for India postulated in that report. They accused the Nehru Report of having admitted in its preamble "the bondage of servitude" and denounced the "Dominion-Status Wallah" as "cowards" and "slaves."⁴⁴ It was said that the Nehru Report disposed of its aims by idealizing them, its difficulties by talking round them and facts by ignoring them.⁴⁵

Mohammed Ali deplored Gandhi's fervent canvassing of the report. He wrote to this effect:

Gandhi has defeated all Muslim attempts for a compromise. He wants to kill communalism by ignoring it. He is giving free reins to the communalism of the majority. (The Nehru Constitution) . . . is the legalized tyranny of numbers and is the way to rift and not peace. It recognizes the rank communalism of the majority as nationalism. The safeguards proposed to limit the high-handedness of the majority are branded as communal.⁴⁶

Moreover, Motilal Nehru was accused of being in the clutches of the Hindu Mahasabha.

Congress was thus again handicapped. With the best will in the world, it was not easy for the Congress to reconcile the conflicting claims of all minorities in all provinces and several organisations representing them. The problem seemed more complex as the Muslims were not prepared for any mutual understanding. The Muslims, as a matter of fact, were demanding more and more safeguards and facilities which was by no means possible for the Congress to accommodate. There could, however, be no cessation of the efforts to solve the communal problem so as to remove biggest hindrance in the way of India realizing its proper destiny.

⁴⁴ N.N. Mitra, *The Indian Quarterly Register*, 1923 (Calcutta, 1928), vol. 2, p. 403.

⁴⁵ Abdul Hamid, *Muslim Separatism in India*, (1967), p. 198.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

The Nehru Report was mainly based on the principle of nationalism. Its first and foremost aim was to frame a constitution for India acceptable to all including the authorities. But since the communal tension between Hindus and Muslims was increasing, it decided to tackle the communal problem before the formation of a constitution. It has clearly been explained that the committee was given the honour to solve these problems and take decision as and when necessary by All Parties Conference to which one of the members was from the Muslim League. After the hard labour the Committee prepared its report. This report gave just share to all the communities. Although the report was strict enough, not giving more special facilities to the Muslims, yet it always favoured them. Comparing the Muslim minorities with the Hindu, Sikh or other minorities, the latter were badly deprived of their just share. But the committee, at the same time, explained its circumstances and appealed to all the communities to accept the report with spirit. If the other minorities could be compelled or persuaded to give way in favour of others, what was wrong with the Muslims that they were not ready for such adjustment? If the critics say that the Nehru Report was not acceptable to the Muslims because it was prejudiced or unjust, what would they say about the several other reports and resolutions on communal settlements occurred till 1946, which were never accepted by the Muslim leaders? In the Lahore Session of 1929, the Congress while clarifying its position ultimately declared the failure of the report:

In view of the lapse of the Nehru Report it is unnecessary to declare the policy of the Congress regarding communal question, the Congress believing that in an independent India, communal questions can only be solved on strictly national lines. But as the Sikhs in particular, and the Muslims and the other minorities in general, had expressed dissatisfaction over the solution of communal questions proposed in the Nehru Report, this Congress assures the Sikhs, the Muslims and other minorities that no solution thereof in any future constitution will be acceptable to the

Congress that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned.⁴⁷

Anyway, the effect of the Nehru Report was obviously damaging.

The Muslim opposition to the Nehru Report on communal lines found organized expression in the All Parties Muslim Conference held at Delhi on the 31st December, 1928 and the 1st January, 1929 under the presidency of Aga Khan. It was attended by representatives of almost all sections amongst the Muslims in India. The only notable absentees were Jinnah with his followers and the Congress Muslims. The conference unanimously adopted a resolution moved by Muhammad Shafi, which demanded a federal system of government for India, with complete autonomy and residuary powers vested in the constituent states; separate electorates for the Muslims; weightage for the Muslims in the provinces where they were in minority, non-interference with the Muslim majority in the provinces where they constituted a majority of the population; one third Muslim representation in central legislature; due share for Muslims in the cabinets and the services, and adequate safeguards for Muslim religion, culture and language. Finally, the resolution summed up: "This conference emphatically declares that no constitution, by whomsoever proposed or devised, will be acceptable to Indian Mussalmans unless it conforms with the principles embodied in this resolution."⁴⁸

Here it may be noted that there was difference between the Jinnah's League, the nationalist Muslims and the Muslim All Parties Conference. The difference mainly occurred on the question of the acceptance of the Nehru Report. Jinnah and the other nationalist Muslims were ready to accept the report. Jinnah then needed to have a reconciliation with the Muslim All Parties Conference. Therefore, he turned towards this rapprochement. In May, 1929, Jinnah issued his famous "Fourteen Points" which laid down more precisely and clearly the

47 Sadiq Ali, n. p. 113.

48 C. H. Phillips, ed., *Evolution of India and Pakistan* (London, 1962), p. 234.

basic Muslim demands. These demands may briefly be added here:

- (1) The form of the constitution should be federal, with residuary powers vested in the provinces.
- (2) A uniform measure of autonomy for provinces.
- (3) All legislatures and other elected bodies should be constituted on the definite principle of adequate and effective representation of minorities in every province without reducing the majority in any province to a minority or even equality.
- (4) In the Central Legislature, Muslim representation shall not be less than one-third.
- (5) Representation of communal groups to be by separate electorates provided that it shall be open to any community at any time to abandon its separate electorate in favour of joint electorate.
- (6) Any territorial redistribution not in any way to affect the Muslim majority in Punjab, Bengal and the N.W.F. Province.
- (7) Full liberty of belief, worship, and observance, propaganda, association and education shall be guaranteed to all communities.
- (8) No Bill or Resolution or any part thereof shall be passed in any legislature or any other elected body if three-fourths of the members of any community in that body opposed it as being injurious to the interests of that community.
- (9) Sind to be separated from the Bombay Presidency.
- (10) Reforms to be introduced in the Frontier Province and Baluchistan as in other provinces.
- (11) Adequate share for Mussalmans to be provided in the constitution in all services, subject to requirements of efficiency.
- (12) Adequate safeguards for the protection and promotion of Muslim culture, education, language, religion, personal laws, and charitable institutions and for their due share in the grants-in-aid.
- (13) No cabinet either central or provincial to be formed

without at least one-third of the ministers being Muslims.

- (14) No change of the constitution by the Central Legislature except with the concurrence of the states constituting the Indian Federation.⁴⁹

These fourteen points have an importance of their own as they were adopted practically in their entirety by MacDonald's communal decision of award. However, some notable leaders like T. B. Saprú and C. P. Ramaswamy tried their best to approach the top Muslim and Hindu leaders for having a fruitful results of the Nehru Report. There are strong evidences which can be found in the series of letter conversations between Saprú and other leaders. He writes to C. P. Ramaswamy on the 30th December, 1929 that to make some reconciliations he made an idea to have an informal meeting in the presence of the Viceroy in which meeting, Jinnah, Patel, Motilal Nehru, Gandhi and himself will be present.⁵⁰ Again he writes to Ramaswamy about his hopeful talk with the Raja of Mahmudabad, Jagat Narain, Chaudhuri Khaliquz-Zaman etc. and he planned to arrange an All Parties Conference with them. He also pointed out in the letter that the Ali Brothers—Shaukat Ali and Mohamad Ali—were the key figures of the Muslim politics of the time. They seemed to be dissatisfied with certain changes in Nehru Report. Saprú, therefore, viewed to convince them about the facts and figures.⁵¹ On the other hand, Saprú approached Malaviyaji and made him agree for the All Parties Conference.⁵² He also had the letter conversations with some Muslim leaders on the subject of Hindu-Muslim problem. His letter correspondence with Shabí Daudi, the working secretary, All India Muslim League, testifies that he was very sincerely involved in calling a preliminary conference of the liberals, Muslims and Mahasabhaists. Most of the letters are very much worth quoting and important in that connection, but since space does not permit here, some

49 N. N. Mitra, n. 44, vol. 3, pp. 365-6.

50 *Saprú Manuscripts*, National Archives. Calcutta, vol. 1.

51 *Ibid*

52 *Ibid*.

portions of the letters can be found in the annexure.⁵³ He asked Shabi Daudi to suggest him some names of the Muslim leaders who should be called for the conference. How much botheration and exertion he was taking to make a meeting point between the Muslims and Hindus, the following extract of his letter to Daudi is a little but sensible example:

...After I left Jinnah's room, I went to see the Hindu leaders and they agreed to come to a preliminary conference of an informal character...The liberals will be glad to discuss things generally...I have written individually to several of the gentlemen mentioned by you...⁵⁴

And finally, he selects the names of the Muslim and Hindu leaders. Their names are as follows:

- (1) Mian Sir Muhammad Shabi
- (2) Sheikh Sir Abdul Qadir
- (3) Maulis Hasrat Mohani
- (4) Maulvi Muhammad Yakub
- (5) Moulvi Muhammad Ali
- (6) Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola
- (7) A.H. Ghusnali
- (8) Nawab Muhammad Ismail Khan
- (9) Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtoola
- (10) Sahibzada Nawab Sir Abdul Qaiyum
- (11) Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan

Dr. Moonje's list is also as follows:

- (1) Sardar Kharak Singh
- (2) Master Tara Singh
- (3) Gyani Sher Singh
- (4) Sardar Bahadur Mehtab Singh
- (5) Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya
- (6) M.R. Jaykar

⁵³ *ENJ*. For details see appendices.

⁵⁴ *ENJ*.

- (7) N.C. Kelkar
- (8) M S. Aney
- (9) Raja Narendra Nath Singh
- (10) Gokulchand Narang
- (11) Bhai Permanand
- (12) Babu Jagatnarayan Lal

Daudi in his letter says that as it was arranged in Jinnah's room, the first talk should be held between the liberals and the Muslims and next between liberals and Mahasabhaists.⁵⁵

Sultan Ahmad, Law Member in the Viceroy's Council, also conveyed his willingness to attend the conference.⁵⁶

But unfortunately all these efforts ended in complete failure and the misunderstanding grew wider.

Gandhi on behalf of the Congress had expressed his willingness to accept all the fourteen points of Jinnah provided after their acceptance the Muslim representatives at the Round Table Conference joined him in his political demand for full freedom. Therefore the Working Committee in April, 1931 decided to send a deputation consisting of Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Seth Jamnalal Bajaj to meet the Muslim leaders to settle the communal question.⁵⁷ There were meetings but they did not lead to any fruitful result. The Working Committee in July, 1931 issued a statement in which it set forth a scheme for the solution of the communal problem. It was drawn up on a broad national basis, though some communal provisions were inserted to meet the necessities of the situation. The Working Committee itself remarked: "It has adopted the scheme as a compromise between the proposals based on undiluted communalism and undiluted nationalism."⁵⁸ Nothing happened according to Gandhi and the Congress was once again accused of partiality to the Muslims and letting down the Hindu community.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Sadiq Ali, n. 11, p. 121.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Letter from a leader of Hindu murti Library, New Delhi.



It seemed that the Muslim leaders were never in mood to give their sincere co-operation to the Congress in its demand of full freedom. Muhammad Iqbal adumbrated the plan for an independent Muslim state on the North-West of India in his address to the annual Muslim League conference at Allahabad in 1930.⁶⁰ But Iqbal was by no means the first to have advocated the partition plan, as it came to be called. The ground had already been prepared for him by some prominent thinkers—Muslims and some non-Muslims.⁶¹ In this connection, one point may be noted. Though the situation was not very easy to be controlled by the Congress, yet it is just presumed that had the Congress been able to perceive the norms of the situation, it could have controlled the situation promptly. The then Muslim politics in India remained in a hopelessly chaotic condition. There was nothing like a unified organization of the Muslims. Shafi had his own All India Muslim League; Jinnah continued to be the leader of another organization with the same nomenclature. The Delhi Conference group was another important front. The Ali brothers headed the Khilafat Conference. The Congress Muslims seceded from the Jinnah League in July, 1929 and formed another All India National Muslim Party.⁶² The Congress could very diplomatically have superseded all of them. But Gandhiji has been accused of too-much appeasement to the Jinnah League. It is said that had Congress not given so much lift to the Jinnah Muslim League, the League would have weakened in due course of time like other Muslim organizations and the history of India would have had a different turn. This view is seconded by Abul Kalam Azad, a sincere colleague of Gandhi, and a permanent leader of the Congress. According to him, Gandhi's approach to Jinnah on several occasions proved political blunder. It gave a new and added importance to Jinnah which he later exploited to the full. He further explained the situation that Jinnah had already lost much of his political importance after he left the Congress in the twenties. Thus, it was largely due to Gandhi's policy of "commission and omission" that Jinnah regained his impor-

60 Shamloo, *Comp., Speeches and Statements of Iqbal* (Lahore, 1945), p. 34.

61 Abul Hamid, n. 43, p. 205.

62 S. R. Metrotra, *India and the Commonwealth*, (London, 1965), p. 230.

tance in Indian political life. When Muslim masses found that Gandhi was continuously running after Jinnah and entreating him, many of them developed a new respect for Jinnah. They also thought that Jinnah was perhaps the best man for getting advantageous terms in the communal settlement.⁶³

Abul Kalam Azad could analyse the situation much better, and so he did. But on the other hand, when we go through the views of Gandhi, we find the situation more complicated than Azad had described.

Gandhi expressed very simply that he aimed at unity and freedom. The Congress, on the one hand, was struggling for freedom, and on the other, it fought for unity in India.

The sensational effects of all these were seen in later days. One of them was, that from 1930 to 1940, the scheme for the confederacy in India was being prepared by almost all the parties in their own way. Some of the main schemes should be referred here. The first scheme was planned by Punjabi gentleman. According to this scheme, the present sub-continent of India could be split up into confederacy of India. The others were: the Aligarh Professor's scheme, C. Rahmat Ali's scheme, S.A. Latif's scheme, Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan's scheme, and Sir Abdullah Haroon Committee's scheme.⁶⁴ These schemes had no concern with the Congress plan.

The Muslims, who were poorer and less educated than the Hindus and had little influence in the administration, were pre-occupied with the idea of preserving themselves as a political and social entity in the sub-continent. They could not, however, think of anything else except the somewhat negative approach implied in the demand for safeguards.

The aftermath of the report left the Congress in most complicated position, alone and unsupported. The gulf between them was so wide that reunion seemed impossible.

⁶³ Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (Delhi, 1959), p. 93.

⁶⁴ Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided* (Bombay, 1947), pp. 175-90.

The Round Table Conferences

It is said that the Nehru Report left Jinnah "high and dry" and ultimately he turned towards his communal interests. He soon acquired a large political following among Muslims due to his "Fourteen Points" and his political sense of wit.

Meanwhile, the British Government assured the Indian leaders that they would hold a Round Table Conference to which representatives of both British India, Indian States and British political parties would be invited. Lord Irwin, while announcing the decision of the Government in October, 1929, to hold such a conference, also made the historic declaration wherein on behalf of the British Government the natural issue of India's constitutional progress was the attainment of Dominion status.

The Congress Party wanted a clear commitment from the Government that the purpose of the Round Table Conference would be to draft a scheme for Dominion status which would be implemented by the British Government. Lord Irwin, the then Viceroy, was impaled on the horns of an unpleasant dilemma. If on the one hand he persisted with the conference without the participation in the conference he was to be accused of neglecting a national body of India. On the other hand, if he wished to induce the Congress to co-operate, he must fulfil its conditions that would virtually mean surrender to the Congress.

He at last, tried to solve the problems by declaring that :

- (1) The Conference caravan must proceed, whatever the decision of the Congress ;
- (2) The delegates from India should be so chosen as to create the impression that India was fully represented, and the exclusion of the Congress representatives could be made out as the absence of only one among the many groups and interests in the country; and
- (3) Meanwhile efforts should be made by the consideration that the Congress should be made to appear as an extremist body which was opposed by all other groups and interests in India.

The following categories of members were, therefore, chosen by the Governor-General :

- (1) Politicians belonging to all-India parties who were moderate, comprising anti-boycotters, keen on keeping India within the orbit of the British Empire.
- (2) Representatives of communal organisations such as the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Sikhs, the Christians, the non-Brahmins and the Scheduled Castes.
- (3) Representatives of economic interests—the landowners and industrialists.
- (4) Representatives of non-Indian groups with particular interests—the Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Burmese.
- (5) Representatives from the Princely States of India.
- (6) The British delegates chosen to represent the three Parliamentary parties.

Also, the Viceroy gave permission to Sapru and Jayakar to intervene, confer with Gandhi and the Congress leaders in jail and try to find a way out. Both the leaders went to approach Gandhi in Yervada prison, Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru in Naini jail, and succeeded in getting them together alongwith Sarojini Naidu and Vallabhbhai Patel. Gandhiji ultimately told that the Congress Party was not prepared to go to London without an assurance to the effect that discussions would concentrate there on the full responsible government in India, i.e. *Purna Swaraj*.

On the other hand, the Muslim leaders were willing to attend the conference. Muhammad Ali called upon Muslims to remain aloof from the Congress movement at a meeting of the All India Muslim Conference at Bombay in April 1930. He remarked that "Gandhi is working under the influence of the communalist Hindu Mahasabha. He is fighting for the supremacy of Hinduism and the submergence of Muslims."¹ This bitterness of attitude increased and was apparent in the Round Table Conference.

Roughly speaking, there were twenty members of the first category of delegates in the conference; sixteen Muslims, three Mahasabhaists, two Sikhs, one Christian, four non-Brahmins, two members of the depressed classes, four landowners and three Burmese. The Indian States were represented by sixteen members, and the British delegation also consisted of sixteen members. Eight from the Labour Party and four each from the Conservative and the Liberal Parties. There were total eighty-nine members.² Lord Irwin took full suggestion of Fazli Hussain, member of his Executive Council, in the selection of Muslim delegates. "He accordingly used all his influence and powers of persuasion in the selection of a Muslim Delegation consisting of members...who would not only represent his viewpoint but do so effectively."³ Coatsman remarks on the purpose of the delegation of the members in the conference as follows :

It should be clearly understood that the Indian delegates to the Round Table Conference were not there to speak with one voice for India as a whole. They were there to represent Indian States, this or that community interest, and so on...The great Muslim leaders like His Highness, the Aga Khan and the late Sir Muhammad Shafi, who whilst determined to safeguard all the legitimate interests of their

¹ Cited in Khalid B. Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase* (Karachi, 1963), p. 76.

² Tarachand, *History of Freedom Movement in India* (Delhi, 1972), vol. 4, p. 142.

³ *ibid.*

community, were determined to do so because they knew that without a solution which Muslims and other minorities believed to be equitable there could be no lasting peace and no great political progress in India. But most of the delegates were charged with the representation of special interests.⁴

Coupland described thus :

Now the whole complex of the Indian problem was brought to life, so to speak, before their eyes on the London stage. Yet not quite the whole. There was a gap in the company. The largest and the most vigorous organism in the Indian politics, the one which appealed most strongly to the youth of India, was not represented. The attitude of the Congress was still implacably hostile.⁵

With the start of the Round Table Conference some misunderstanding of purposes of the Indian delegates and for the term minority started. It seemed that the delegates had come for the exhibition rather than for their demands. Secondly, the term minority was greatly misused there. Roughly India was divided into two parts as : (1) India with a Hindu majority, and (2) India with a Muslim majority.

Therefore, naturally the whole plan for the Indian constitution was confused.

In its plenary session which followed from the 17th November, to 21st November, Tej Bahadur Sapru, who initiated the discussion on the 17th November, created a sensation by his remarkable speech, which changed the whole atmosphere of the conference. He enunciated the idea of an Indian federation which would consist of both the Indian princely states and the provinces under British rule and which could be embodied immediately in the constitution which was to be framed by an Act of Parliament.⁶

4 J. Coatman, *Years of Destiny : India 1926-32* (London 1932), pp. 305-6.

5 R. Coupland, *The Indian Problem* (London, 1945), pt. 1, p. 113.

6 *Sapru Manuscripts*, National Archives, Calcutta.

The Muslim point of view was voiced by Jinnah and Shafi. Both welcomed federation and demanded a status of equality with the Dominions. But Jinnah added: "Unless you create that sense of security among the minorities which will secure a willing co-operation and allegiance to the State no constitution that you may frame will work successfully."7 Jinnah clears his motive in the next sentence: "What the princes are anxious about is that they want certain safeguards in that constitution, as the Mussalmans demand safeguards for their community." In the same context, while giving his speech, Fazlul-Haq quotes Commander Kenworthy as such:

The communal (or religious) differences in India present perhaps the most serious problem of all. It is a fact, admitted to me personally and regretted by such great leaders as Gandhi and Malaviya on the Hindu side and Jinnah and Moonje on the Muslim side, that if anything the communal differences have become worse in recent years.⁸

Fazlul-Haq further says:

The Mussalman is perfectly clear. The moment we are convinced that in the future constitution of India, not merely Mussalmans but all minorities, Indian Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, 'untouchables', the commercial interests and credit interests, will be safe and secure... We shall go much further than the most enthusiastic members of the Indian National Congress in demanding the fullest measure of responsible government for India.⁹

Aga Khan concludes thus:

Mr. Prime Minister, if we can produce a federal scheme that will please the Princes, that will please the Hindus, that will

7 *Proceedings, Indian Round Table Conference, 12 November to 19 January (Calcutta, 1931)*, p. 139.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 143.

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 143-9.

please the Muslims, that will please the smaller minorities and that will satisfy all the legitimate commercial interests, and at the same time for a period reserve certain objects, there is no reason, why we should not at this moment start on the basis of full self-government and responsibility.¹⁰

The First Round Table Conference, no doubt, made it abundantly clear that all Indians, irrespective of caste, party, community or interest were united in the demand for the transfer of responsibility to an Indian cabinet answerable to an elective legislature. Most of them agreed that for the transitional period, some safeguards or reservation of powers was necessary.¹¹

Thus, the political drama in India took a new shape during the three Round Table Conferences which were held in the years 1930, 1931 and 1932. The conferences outwardly aimed at a workable solution to the Indian constitutional problem. But the first session of the Round Table Conference afforded the first "close-up" of the constitutional future¹² because the Congress was not represented, as it had refused to accept the Simon Report and insisted that the Conference was useless unless Britain first conceded the principle of complete independence and in the absence of any such stipulation, it had "started a non-cooperation movement on the 12th March, 1930. All other parties attended the Conference. The Muslims were represented among others, by Aga Khan, who was elected as the head of the Indian Delegation, Muhammad Iqbal, Jinnah and Zafarullah Khan.

The cardinal question at the conference and the one on which it was virtually wrecked, was that of Hindu-Muslim antagonism. It was a minority problem, but "there never was a minority problem like this in the history of the world."¹³ Suggestions came from every side for this communal solution. Edward Thompson revived the idea of the problem being put to arbitration before a panel of three—one Indian nominated by the

10 *Ibid.*, p. 170.

11 Tarachand, n. 2, pp. 143-9.

12 B.R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan* (Bombay, 1945), p. 166.

13 K.K. Aziz, *Britain and Muslim India* (London, 1963), p. 126.

Hindus, one by the Muslims and one Englishman. Thompson viewed that the young Muslims were not as communal-minded as the old ones. But in certain context this suggestion was not accepted by the majority of the Muslims. The first session of the Round Table Conference which was unwieldy body of eighty-nine members and which began on the 12th December, 1930, lasted for some nine weeks. During this period, the Muslim position was embarrassing. The British Labour Ministry was frankly averse to the separatist politics¹⁴. It proposed a large measure of self-rule and was willing to go ahead even if some of the more basic disputes (as Muslims viewed them) were not resolved. This uneasiness was intensified by the Irwin-Gandhi settlement, which accorded, what appeared to be a privileged position to the Congress.¹⁵ Within three weeks of the "Pact" there occurred the savage communal riots at Cawnpore which significantly meant reaction against Congress plan to face the unwilling Muslim shopkeepers for the participation in *hartal* in memory of Bhagat Singh who was executed on 23rd March.

It so happened that while the First Round Table Conference was meeting in London, the civil disobedience movement was running at its speed in India. It alarmed the Government and by the end of 1930, the Government had to realise that without the participation of the Congress in the conference any settlement was not just because the Indian people were not represented properly. The *Times* warned: "No Indian delegation without Gandhi, the two Nehrus, Malaviya or Patel could possibly be looked on as representative."¹⁶

Therefore, on the 17th January, 1931, the Viceroy prepared the ground for rapprochement with a persuasive speech in the Indian Legislative Assembly. He said:

However mistaken any man may think him to be, and however deplorable may appear the results of the policy associated with his name, no one can fail to recognise the spiritual force which impels Mr. Gandhi to count no sacrifice

14 Abdul Hamid, *Muslim Separatism in India* (Punjab, 1967), p. 204.

15 Ambodkar, n. 12, p. 167.

16 *Manchester Guardian* (London), 12 January 1931.

too great in the cause, as he believes, of India he loves.¹⁷

Lord Irwin ultimately decided to see Gandhi. They met together and on the night of the 4th March, the agreement was signed as follows:

- (1) As regards constitutional questions, Federation was admitted as the essential basis, and Indian responsibility with safeguards as necessary.
- (2) The Congress would be invited to participate in the discussions of the Conference.
- (3) Civil Disobedience would be discontinued, which meant organised defiance of law, non-payment of land revenue and other legal dues, publication of news sheets in support of civil disobedience, attempt to influence civil and military servants and village officials against Government would be given up.
- (4) Regarding the boycott of British goods, the encouragement of Indian industries by propaganda was permitted, but boycott as a political weapon would be eschewed.
- (5) Picketing employed in furtherance of boycott of foreign goods or consumption of liquor would not be allowed outside the limits permitted by law.
- (6) Gandhiji's suggestion for enquiry into the police excesses was considered undesirable.
- (7) Ordinances promulgated in connection with the civil disobedience movement would be withdrawn.
- (8) Notifications declaring associations unlawful would be withdrawn.
- (9) Pending prosecutions would be withdrawn, except in cases of offences involving violence.
- (10) Prisoners not charged with violence would be released.
- (11) Fines would be remitted.
- (12) Moveable property seized in connection with the movement, if in the possession of Government, or forfeited or attached in connection with the realization of land revenue would be returned.

17 N. N. Mitra, *Indian Annual Register* (Calcutta, 1931), vol. 1, p. 127.

himself appointed as the sole representative of the Congress. He sailed by the last possible boat which could carry him to England to join the Conference.

Thus Mahatma Gandhi was deputed on behalf of the Congress as its sole delegate to the Second Round Table Conference, where Gandhi participated from the 7th September to 19th December. As has already been noticed, the British Government had nominated Indians from British India including many Muslims but it rejected Gandhi's suggestion to invite Ansari.

The most important and relevant aspect of the Second Round Table Conference was its efforts to solve the communal problem in India.

One of the committees appointed by the Round Table Conference was the "Minorities Committee" which was entrusted with the task of dealing with the question of minorities. The composition of the "Minorities Committee" was as follows :

- (1) Ramsay MacDonald (Chairman)
- (2) Issac Fort
- (3) Wedgewood Benn
- (4) Sir Samuel Hoare
- (5) C.Y. Chintamani
- (6) Lord Snell
- (7) Major the Hon. G. Stanley
- (8) The Marquess of Zetland
- (9) H.H. The Aga Khan
- (10) Sir Saiyed Ali Imam
- (11) B.R. Ambedkar
- (12) E.C. Benthall
- (13) G.D. Birla
- (14) Hubert Carr
- (15) Nawab of Chhitari
- (16) Maulavi M. Shafi Daodi

- (17) S.K. Dutta
- (18) Fazl-ul-Haq
- (19) M.K. Gandhi
- (20) Diwan Bahadur Raja Narendra Nath
- (21) Mrs. Sarojini Naidu
- (22) Sir A.P. Patro
- (23) Diwan Bahadur Ramchandra
- (24) B. Shiva Rao
- (25) Sir Sultan Ahmed
- (26) Sir Muhammad Shafi etc.³⁰

The report of the Sub-committee III (Minority) approved by the Committee of the full Conference on 19th January, 1931, recorded that the opinion was unanimous. It suggested :

In order to secure the co-operation of all communities which are essential to the successful working of responsible government in India, it was necessary that the new constitution should contain provisions designed to assure the communities that their interests would not be prejudiced and that it was particularly desirable that some agreement should come to the major communities in order to facilitate the consideration of the whole question.³¹

In these circumstances, it recommended that the conference should register an opinion that it was desirable for an agreement upon the claims made to it that negotiations should be continued between the representatives concerned.³²

Virtually the Prime Minister did not relish the role of an arbiter. He made it clear that Indians must solve this problem for themselves. The first, of the privileges and burdens of a self-governing people, he postulated, was to agree as to how the democratic principle was to be applied.³³

³⁰ Proceedings, *Indian Round Table Conference* (London, 1931), vol. 2, pp. 331-4.

³¹ *Ibid*

³² *Ibid*.

³³ Abdul Hamid, n. 14, p. 209.

Therefore, an ad hoc Committee was set up to examine this problem. At the first meeting of the resumed committee on the 25th September, it was reported that informal negotiations were proceeding between certain members of the communities concerned, and after discussion it was unanimously agreed that in order to give these negotiations an opportunity to reach a conclusion, the committee should adjourn until the 1st October, 1931. On its meeting on that day a further motion of adjournment until the 8th October, 1931 to enable the continuance of the negotiations, was moved by Gandhi and was unanimously accepted. It was agreed that the problem of the depressed classes and other smaller minorities would form part of the communal problem which was to be the subject matter of the conversation.³⁴

At times there were emotional passages between the advocates of conflicting views. When it came to business, the question of Hindu-Muslim relations was the first to engage the attention of the conference. Aga Khan was often seeing Gandhi to discuss and determine the communal issue. *The Manchester Guardian* reported on June, 1931 thus :

The Moslems see that the new federal government, if and when it comes into existence, will have a large Hindu majority. The entrance of the States has increased the majority for the states are chiefly Hindu. There is a strong tendency to counteract the permanent majority by trying to form a large northern bloc of provinces which will be Muslim, and in which the Hindus will be, as it were, hostages for the good behaviour of their co religionists in the centre and the south. Many Muslims do not believe in the permanence of a Federal India and that they foresee a Moslem State in the north stretching from Karachi to north Bengal. This idea may help to explain their insistence on...the separation of Sind...that the Moslem N.W.F.P. should become an ordinary province...and the securing of a permanent majority in Punjab, and if possible in Bengal.³⁵

³⁴ *Proceedings*, n. 30, pp. 338-53.

³⁵ Cited in Tarachand, n. 2, p. 167.

The meeting of the conference fixed for the 8th October, 1931 to receive the report of the Conciliation Committee provided one of the dramatic episodes of the session. A hushed silence fell on everybody as the Prime Minister took his seat and called upon Gandhi to speak. Gandhi first expressed his deep sense of sorrow for the absence of Ansari and then insisted upon his claim for the representation of all the communities in India. He insisted upon the fact that the communal tension was due to the interference and the policy of divide and rule of the foreign domination. Further, he went on to say that Congress was the only representative body of all the parties in India. He stated thus :

All other parties at this meeting represent sectional interests. Congress alone claims to represent the whole of India, all interests. It is no communal organisation ; it is a determined enemy of communalism in any shape or form. Congress knows no distinction of race, colour or creed ; its platform is universal...it does represent all the minorities which have lodged their claim here and which, or the signatories on their behalf, claim...³⁶

On the whole, Gandhi claimed on certain grounds that Congress alone represented India. He asserted that the untouchables could not be separated from the body of Hinduism, and that Hindus and Muslims could and should live together in a united India without either separate representation or special safeguards,³⁷ each one of which was contested by a majority of other delegates.³⁸ The Memorandum of the Hindu Mahasabha on the Congress formula of communal settlement probably classifies the facts. B.S. Moonje, on behalf of Hindu Mahasabha, expressed his whole-hearted appeal to the assurances given by the Congress that "no solution thereof (i.e. of communalism) in any future constitution will be acceptable to the Congress

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Asir*, n. 13, p. 126.

that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned."³⁹ He suggested some notable amendments for the communal solution. A memorandum detailing Congress's scheme for a communal settlement was circulated on behalf of the Congress. The scheme formulated by the Congress laid stress on the fact that the Congress takes nationalism as its ideal. And to hold this fact only Congress dropped the Nehru Report. It says :

Hence, the Congress is precluded from setting forth any communal solution of the communal problem. But at this critical juncture in the history of the nation, it is felt that the Working Committee should suggest the adoption by the country a solution though communal in appearance, yet as nearly national as possible and generally acceptable to the communities concerned.⁴⁰

B.S. Moonje testified and gave his full consent to the Memorandum. Expressing his satisfaction to the assurance given by the Congress he stated:

On behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha...I express my whole-hearted approval to the assurance given by the Congress that no solution thereof (i.e. of communal question) in any future constitution will be acceptable to the Congress that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned.⁴¹

Further, Moonje suggested to amend the scheme on the following grounds:

- (1) In clause 1 (a) and (b) regarding the fundamental rights, some more sentences should be added.
- (2) In clause 2, note (a), the words "if possible", be added after the words "so extensive as to reflect".
- (3) The clause 3 should be modified as follows—

³⁹ *Proceedings*, n. 30, pp. 338-54.

⁴⁰ *Proceedings*, n. 29, p. 1391.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1392.

that in any scheme of minority protection by reservation of seats, no minority community in any province should have reservation below its population strength and it must have the right to contest additional seats.⁴²

Besides the Hindu Mahasabha, there were certain claims of the minority communities also. These are:

- (a) No person shall, by reason of his origin, religion, caste or creed, be prejudiced in any way in regard to public employment, office of power or with regard to enjoyment of his civic rights and the exercise of any trade or calling.
- (b) Statutory safeguards shall be incorporated in the constitution with a view to protect enactments of the legislature of discriminatory laws affecting any community.
- (c) Full religious liberty, i.e. full liberty of belief, worship observance, propaganda associations and education, shall be guaranteed to all communities subject to the maintenance of public order and morality
- (d) No person shall merely by change of faith lose any civic right or privilege, or be subject to any penalty.
- (e) The right to establish, manage and control, at their own expense charitable, religious and social institutions, schools and other educational establishments with the right to exercise their religions therein.
- (f) The constitution shall embody adequate safeguards for the protection of religion, culture and personal law and the promotion of education, language, charitable institutions of the minority communities and for their due share in grants-in-aid given by the state and by the self-governing bodies.
- (g) All communities at present enjoying representation in any legislature through nomination or election shall have representation in all legislatures through separate electorates and the minorities shall have not less than

the proportion set forth in the Annexure but no majority shall be reduced to a minority or even an equality. Provided that after a lapse of ten years it will be open to Muslims in Punjab and Bengal and any minorities communities in any other provinces to accept joint electorates, or joint electorates with reservation of seats, by the consent of the community concerned.⁴³

The Muslim representatives expressed their special claims, which are as follows:

- (a) The North-West Frontier Province shall be constituted as a Governor's province on the same footing as other provinces with due regard to the necessary requirements for the security of the Frontier. Besides, in the formation of the Provincial Legislature the nominations shall not exceed more than 10 per cent of the whole.
- (b) Sind shall be separated from the Bombay Presidency and made a Governor's Province similar to and on the same footing as other provinces in British India.
- (c) Mussalman representation in the central legislature shall be one third of the total number of the House and their representation in the central legislature shall not be less than the proportion set forth in the Annexure.⁴⁴

A much observed feature of the Conference was an unceasing tug-of-war between Gandhi and Ambedkar. Ambedkar, the leader of the untouchables, was an able advocate, fluent in speech and aggressive by temperament. By the time he himself was facing a problem to save the untouchables from the high caste Hindus' attack, Gandhi took up the position that untouchables were Hindus and that they could not be separated from the main body of Hinduism. On the other hand, Ambedkar insisted that untouchables needed separate constituencies and rigid protection. Gandhi would not think of a compromise on the terms which were remotely resembling those of Ambedkar.

43 *Ibid.*

44 *Ibid.*

Gandhi's refusal turned Ambedkar to other minority representatives and its result was an agreement commonly known as the "Minorities Pact" which was neither accepted by Hindus nor by the Sikhs. It put Gandhi in dilemma.⁴⁵ As soon as he realized that many of his own countrymen were opposed to his conception of United India, he lost all interest in the proceedings and he more than once "looked like walking out of the conference".

Gandhi in this way received a universal condemnation. He was accused of desiring peace and compromise only on his own terms, and while avoiding taking his Indian colleagues into his confidence he challenged their *locus standi* and considered himself as the only Indian fit to speak for India. He continued to repeat his claim for complete independence from British terrorism, slavery and tyranny. The Prime Minister was at last provoked to the extent that he spoke out: "Be honest and face the facts."⁴⁶ It became thus clear to the people around that Gandhi was ignoring the real problem. Moreover, a number of critics started telling that Hindu Mahasabha had gained complete ascendancy over the Congress in India and that its foremost spokesman, Madan Mohan Malaviya, had the upper hand of Gandhi in the conference.⁴⁷

The failure of Gandhi to achieve any success brings out in brief the inconsistency and unwisdom of the Congress in refusing to attend the first Round Table Conference and accepting the invitation to the Second Round Table Conference. The conditions on which Congress agreed to attend the Second Round Table Conference, could have easily been secured on the occasion of the First Round Table Conference also. By attending it from the very beginning in sufficient strength, the Congress could have influenced its outlook and its general approach. Gandhi was already confronted with a communalist structure which had been allowed to grow up freely without any let or hindrance.

45 C. Rajagopalachari and J. C. Kumarappa, *Nation's Yoke* (Ahmedabad, 1932), p. 185.

46 Abdul Hamid, n. 14, p. 120.

47 *Ibid.*

The failure, it is analysed, was mainly due to the lack of harmony among Indian delegates and the obstinate reluctance of the conservatives to part with real power in India.⁴⁸ Majumdar has analysed its failure thus:

But the tactics, or lack of tactics, on the part of Gandhi was also responsible for it to a large extent...Gandhi's idealism made no impression on them. His frank gesture for peace and cooperation at any price was taken as a sign of weakness. His lack of diplomacy in putting all his cards on the table was fully exploited by the astute British politicians...Gandhi had realized from the very beginning that the importance of Indian National Congress, which he represented, was deliberately minimized, if not totally ignored.⁴⁹

Thus the main business before the Congress—the solution of the Hindu-Muslim differences—did not only fail but also laid stress for the saviour problems in future. The following remarks will aptly reveal the situation:

We have made up our minds that the fight with the Congress was inevitable; we felt and said that the sooner it came the better...the important thing to us seemed to be to carry the Hindu in the street as represented by such people as Sapru, Jayakar, Patro and others. If we could not get them to fight the Congress, we could at least ensure that they would not back the Congress.⁵⁰

Elaborating his argument, Majumdar has stated:

The Muslims were a solid and enthusiastic team...They played their cards with great skill throughout...The Muslims have become firm allies of the Europeans. They are very satisfied with their own position and are prepared to work with us.⁵¹

48 R.C. Majumdar, ed., *Struggle for Freedom* (Bombay, 1969), p. 497.

49 *Ibid.*

50 *Ibid.*, p. 494

51 *Ibid.*, pp. 493-4.

The British press commented with triumph by stating that "Gandhi landed in India with empty hands".⁵²

Ironically enough, the Round Table Conference which was intended to secure political accord in India resulted in a deeper conflict. The parties were more estranged and divided than ever before. We find two different views about the failure of the purpose of the Conference. At first, the critics of Gandhi maintained that due to lack of political foresightedness in Gandhi the negotiations failed. Moreover, K.K. Aziz opines that his consciousness of power and authority in India made him a poor negotiator. Gandhi treated the smaller group with a negligence and the practical details of government were beyond his understanding.⁵³ The *Manchester Guardian* endorsed this view.⁵⁴ On the contrary, Rajendra Prasad gave a different view. According to him, there were forces working behind the scenes which made any such settlement impossible.⁵⁵ Edward Thompson's statement supports his view :

During the Round Table Conference there was a rather obvious understanding and alliance between the more intransigent Moslems and certain particularly undemocratic British political circles. That alliance is constantly asserted in India to be the real block in progress. I believe that I could prove that this is largely true. And there is no question that in former times we frankly practised 'divide and rule' method in India. From Warren Hasting's time onwards men made no bones of the pleasure the Hindu-Moslem conflict gave them; even such men as Elphinstone and Malcolm and Metcalfe admitted its value to the British.⁵⁶

Consequently, the second session ended without any communal settlement in sight and the Prime Minister was left with the onerous task of arbitration. This was done in the Com-

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 493.

⁵³ K.K. Aziz, n. 13, p. 126.

⁵⁴ *Manchester Guardian* (London), 1 October 1931.

⁵⁵ Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided* (Bombay, 1947), p. 135.

⁵⁶ Edward Thompson, *Enlist India for Freedom* (London, 1940), p. 52.

munal Award published on the 10th August, 1932. Regarding provision of the award, Muslims, Europeans and Sikhs were given the right to elect their representatives through separate communal electorates. Certain seats were reserved for Maharattas in some selected general constituencies in Bombay. The depressed classes were given seats which were to be filled by elections from special constituencies in which they alone could be entitled to vote in the general constituency. Indian Christians were also allotted seats which were to be filled by voters in separate communal electorates and so also did the Anglo-Indians. A number of seats were allotted specially to women which were to be elicited between the various communities. Special seats were allotted to labour, commerce, industry, mining, planning and landlord communities. Thus the electorate in 1919 was divided into ten parts and now it was fragmented into seventeen unequal bits. Separate electorates were thought against their wishes on women and Indian Christians. The Hindu community was further weakened by giving separate representation to the scheduled classes.⁵⁷ Division on the basis of religion, occupation and service was made. In those provinces where Hindus formed a majority of the population and had a clear majority of seats in the provincial legislatures (i.e. in all provinces except Punjab, Bengal and the North West Frontier Province), the Muslims received, as in the past, seats in excess of their population ratio.⁵⁸ In Bengal, where Muslims formed 55 per cent and Hindus 43 per cent (though according to Rajendra Prasad, Hindus formed 44.8 per cent) of the total population, Muslims received about 48 per cent and Hindus 39 per cent of the seats. The proposal of the Government of India to give to the Bengali Muslims more than what they had asked for did not go through. But the fact that they wanted to do so remains as an evidence of their inclinations towards Muslim cause.

It was the second occasion when the British Government, as an arbiter gave the Muslims more than what they had asked for when the communal decision was given in 1932. Sir Mohammad Shafi made two different proposals in the minorities sub-

⁵⁷ Rajendra Prasad, n. 55, p. 136.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

committee of the Round Table Conference. In his speech on January 6, 1931, Sir Shafi put forth the following proposal as a basis for communal settlements:

We are prepared to accept joint electorates on the conditions named by me, that the rights at present enjoyed by the Mussalmans in the minority provinces should be continued to them...In the Punjab and in Bengal they should have two joint electorates and representation on a population basis... there should be the principle of reservation of seats coupled with Maulana Mohammad Ali's conditions.⁵⁹

Again, on January 14, 1931 he delivered his another speech before the Committee:

...that in Punjab the Mussalmans should have through communal electorates 19% of the entire number of seats in the whole house, and should have liberty to contest the special constituencies which it is proposed to create in that province. In Bengal the Mussalmans should have through communal electorates 46%...In so far as the minority provinces are concerned, the Mussalmans should continue to enjoy the weightage which they have at present through separate electorates similar weightage to be given to our Hindu brethren in Sind, and to our Hindu and Sikh brethren in the North West Frontier Province.⁶⁰

The difference between the two proposals is clear—joint electorates if accompanied by statutory majority and if statutory majority was refused then a minority of seats with separate electorates. The British Government took statutory majority from first demand and separate electorates from the second demand and gave the Muslims both concessions when they had not asked for the both.

The British Government was entirely disinterested in giving sympathetic consideration to Hindu majority. And that it

⁵⁹ *Proceedings*, n. 33, p. 331.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

penalized the Hindus everywhere to cut down their representation even though they were in a minority in Bengal. This disinterestedness in them induced the British to refuse to the Sikhs the quantity of weightage in Punjab which they had granted to Muslims in other provinces and it allowed not only separate electorate but also a reservation of seats for the Muslims even in those provinces where they were in majority. Under these circumstances the question of settlement of communal problem became a distant proposition. However, the Government promised to accept any alternative to the Award. An effort was made for a communal harmony in India even after this award was declared on August 16, 1932. After the declaration of Mahatma Gandhi's fast unto death the parties were planning to discuss it with the Europeans. But by the time Malaviya was on his way to Calcutta with Muslim representatives to have a talk with the Europeans about their weightage, the newspapers published the news that Sir-Samuel Hoare had forestalled him by announcing that His Majesty's Government had decided to allot 33½ per cent of British Indian seats in the Central Legislature to Muslims, and it not only constituted Sind into a separate province but also decided to provide it with adequate finances and subvention from the Central Government. Thus the fruits of the labour of the Unity Conference which after great efforts had succeeded in reaching an agreement on all points between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and other Indian communities were cruelly dashed to pieces by this very timely announcement of Sir Samuel Hoare. B.R. Ambedkar maintains that if the Hindus objected to anything, the Muslims policy seemed to insist upon it and it was given up only when the Hindus had shown their willingness to offer a price for it by giving the Muslims some concessions. To illustrate this point, one can refer to the question of separate and joint electorates. The Hindus had been, according to him, utterly wrong in fighting over joint electorates, especially in provinces where the Muslims were in minority. The Congress had in the meantime gone through another ordeal of suffering. When it was in a position to express its opinion freely it refused to do so. At its session held at Bombay in October, 1934, its resolution declared that "the Congress claims to represent

equally all the communities composing the Indian nation and therefore in view of the division of opinion, can neither accept nor reject the communal award as long as the division of opinion lasts."⁶¹

Although it is worthwhile to note that Gandhi and other Congress leaders personally condemned the Award calling it as anti-national, yet the declaration of the Congress policy caused vehement criticisms of the Congress from inside and outside the country.

The Communal Award divided not only the communities but it threatened to split the Congress itself too. Two bonafide members of the Congress—Malaviya and Aney—resigned from the Congress on the same ground on June 13, 1934. Aney wrote to the President of All India Congress Committee thus: "I am entirely opposed to the resolutions, redefinition of Congress policy on the white paper proposals and the communal award which the Committee has passed at its meeting."⁶²

The Communal Award naturally went in for a good deal of adverse criticism—both as regards its principle and details—in the nationalist circles in India. A letter written to Gandhi by Sheikh Mohammed Alam may be relevant here: "I feel that the Congress has felt shy here in giving a bold battle to communalism which has eaten up every fibre of our body politic."⁶³

Another letter to Kelkar from Savarkar on the identical lines says: "The attempt to divide the nation for ever into pieces as provided for in the Communal Award must be rooted out."⁶⁴

The rumour was in the air that the Congress leaders out of fear of offending the Muslims did not want to be disturbed until some substitute, agreeable to Muslims, could be found. One daring letter from Shadi Ram Sharma, Member, City Congress Working Committee to Jawaharlal Nehru is worth quoting :

61 Sadiq Ali, *ed.*, *Congress and the Minority Committee* (Allahabad, 1947), p. 125.

62 Records, Private Letters, Government of India, File No. G. 34/1934, New Delhi.

63 *Ibid.*

64 Confidential Records Government of India, Home Department, Political File No. 124/34, National Archives, New Delhi.

The Congress has taken a most anomalous attitude towards the communal award....Congress say, "We are nationalists, we oppose communalism, we reject it". But after a pause when called upon to declare their policy on the communal award they say, "We neither reject it nor accept it". Again it says, "We want joint electorate. Separate electorate is the enemy of nationalism. We reject it." But when separate electorate comes, they say, "We neither reject nor accept it".⁶⁵

Shadi Ram Sharma went on to say: "It is tantamount to a passive acceptance rather than an active rejection."⁶⁶

As a rejection to the Award declaration, an anti-communal award conference was held in February, 1933 at Delhi which discussed and criticized the communal award. Nevertheless, the Hindu Mahasabha bombarded the Congress with its criticisms. Henceforth, as circumstances point out after the communal award's declaration, the Congress was once again accused of partiality to the Muslims and letting down the Hindu community. On the contrary, the reaction and attitude of Muslims were more adverse. Concerning the Congress policy towards the Muslims on that issue, we must go through Ambedkar's views. He opined that the Congress failed to realize two things. The first thing which the Congress failed to realize was that there is a difference between appeasement and settlement. The second thing which the Congress failed to realize was that the policy of concession had increased Muslim aggressiveness and what was worse that Muslims interpreted these concessions as a sign of defeatism on the part of the Hindus and the absence of their will to resist.⁶⁷ Ambedkar suggests:

The only remedy for it is a settlement. If Pakistan is a settlement, it is a proposition worth consideration. As a settlement it will do away with this constant need of appeasement and ought to be welcomed by all those who

67 N. N. Mitra, *Indian Annual Register* (Calcutta, 1934), p. 78.

66 Records, Private Letters, n. 62.

56 Ambedkar, n. 12, pp. 260-1.

prefer the peace and tranquility of a settlement to the insecurity due to the growing political appetite shown by the Muslims in their dealings with the Hindus.⁶⁸

But after all the Congress was fighting for better purpose i.e. for the independence. During that period it had found itself between the horns of dilemma. So it sought to escape from both the horns of dilemma by neither accepting nor rejecting the Communal Award. In this connection we come across the following entry in Jawaharlal's autobiography :

Gandhi did not like many of the communal demands put forward on behalf of the Muslim delegates to the conference... Some of these demands were a bar to democracy and freedom. But still he offered to accept the whole lot of them... if the Muslim delegates there gained forces with him and the Congress on the political issue that is an independence...⁶⁹

Gandhi himself was very much clear and justified towards his policy. While defending his argument he added: "Divided we must fall. Any third power may easily enslave India so long as we Hindus and Mussalmans are ready to cut each other's throats."⁷⁰

Thus the answers of all these criticisms (towards the Congress policy to the Muslim appeasement) lie in the fact that to sweep out this third power from India the Congress did apply every justified and sometimes even unjustified policy for which it had to face heavy criticisms and opposition from its own people. Nehru justified the stand of the Congress thus:

People forget sometimes that we are functioning abnormally. They discuss the constitutional issue in terms of normality or they criticise the Congress for its securing inactivity, forgetting that the Congress has arrived at a certain stage of historical growth. It is not at present a constitutional or

⁶⁸ 1844.

⁶⁹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, (New Delhi, 1952), p. 294.

⁷⁰ M.K. Gandhi, *Communal Unity* (Ahmadabad, 1949), p. 4.

legal body.⁷¹

It is really tragic to note that in spite of all efforts of the Congress for having a good relation with Muslims, after communal award, the gulf was more widened. Muslims began to shout for their separate state. But it would be unjust to regard the Congress as the responsible factor for any such sort of things. The feelings of their separatist tendency were deep rooted in the minds of certain Muslims from the quite early period. As early as in 1922 Sardar Muhammad Gul Khan forecast: "Hindu-Muslim unity will never become a fact."⁷²

In 1928, Aga Khan observed in the *Times* thus: "India when freed from outside control, cannot have a unitary, non-federal government. The country must accept in all its consequences its own inevitable diversities".⁷³

Iqbal justified the Muslim demand for the creation of a Muslim India as early as 1930.⁷⁴

Even at the time of the Round Table Conference, Aga Khan had stated: "Always the argument returned to certain basic points of difference, was India a nation or two nations?"⁷⁵ From the very beginning of the negotiations, the basic difference between the Hindus and the Muslims was that the Hindus desired a powerful central government, occupying a position of dominance over provincial governments while the Muslims "stood for a loose federation...the Muslims demanded...separate electorate and weightages, the Hindus their abolition".⁷⁶ As a matter of fact, the Muslim leaders were advised to keep distance from the Congress. They were exploiting the Muslim mass on religious basis and as an apple of discord they were ready to avail every opportunity given by the British Government in this respect.

The chapter, as we have examined its nature, should conclude with the remarkable assessment of a British, Theodore Morison, Principal, M.A.O. College, Aligarh. He opines that the greatest

71 Jawaharlal Nehru, *Recent Essays and Writings* (Allahabad, 1934), p. 42.

72 S.S. Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan* (Karachi, 1970), p. xv.

73 *The Times* (London), 12-13 October 1928.

74 Shamboo, Comp., *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*.

75 Aga Khan, *The Memoirs* (London, 1954), p. 22.

76 Abdul Hamid, n. 14, p. 204.

obstacle to Indian unity was the absence of a sentiment of nationality (the greatest cohesive force in politics) in the country "where the sentiment of nationality exists it is possible in a people of comparatively low state of civilization to maintain an independent political existence but in its absence neither bravery nor intelligence avails."⁷⁷

Thus we see that the wind started blowing against the Congress, rather say against the possibility of communal *rapprochement*. Obviously, the intention of Gandhi at the Round Table Conference was misinterpreted, afterwards the reactions of the Muslims as well as of the other minorities were misguided, and the steps taken by the government were misunderstood. Obviously, none took things on purely national scale.

Government of India Act 1935

The Government of India Act 1935 may fairly be called an outcome of continuing struggle and preparation for a constitution in India based on federal pattern. The circumstances pursued for the re-examination of the whole constitutional question. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the course began with the appointment of a statutory commission under Sir John Simon in 1927. Then the Nehru Report came in 1928 which proposed to deal with the principle of balance between the Hindu majority and Muslim majority provinces. To be very brief, it recommended that the number of the Muslim majority provinces should be increased to four by the addition of the North West Frontier Province to full responsible government at the Centre as well as in the provinces which was more unitary than federal in character. Most of the Muslims reacted sharply to this report. Then the Report of the Simon Commission was published in 1930. A marked feature of the Report was its reversion to the scepticism which had prevailed before 1917 as to the practicability of British Parliamentary Government in India. It suggested that the provinces might, in course of time, develop other and varying constitutional practices and asserted that in any case the Central or Federal government could never operate on British lines.

The Round Table Conference was the next phase which ended in these sessions in London in 1930, 1931 and 1932. The

outcome of these conferences was a substantial, if incomplete, measure of agreement as to the main lines of a new constitution for India—a Federal Constitution—with responsible government, subject to specific "safeguards", operating fully in the provinces and partially at the centre. Communal disharmony, and as a result of it "Communal Award" were also its outstanding features.

Afterwards, in the light of the proceedings of the conference, the British Government formulated its proposals in a White Paper which was submitted to the consideration of a Joint Select Committee of both the Houses of Parliament. Its report formed the basis of a Bill which was introduced at the end of 1934 which became law in the summer of 1935.

Before we analyse the role of the Congress and Muslims under the implementation of the Government of India Act 1935, the main provisions of the Act of 1935 must be kept in mind. These were :

- (1) It completed the development of provincial autonomy by giving the provinces a separate legal personality and liberating them entirely from central control except for certain specific purpose.
- (2) It established the "Federation of India" comprising both provinces and states, with a Federal Central Government and legislature for the management of central subjects.
- (3) Dyarchy, abolished in the provinces, was reproduced at the Centre. The subjects of Foreign Affairs and Defence were reserved to the control of the Governor-General; the other central subjects were "transferred" to ministers, subject to similar "safeguards" as in the provinces.
- (4) The federal principle was recognised in the provision for the indirect or provincial election to the lower house of the central legislature, but in general the constitution accorded more the closer than with the loose type of federation.
- (5) On the other controversial issues, the Act maintained the policy of 1917. It confirmed and extended parlia-

mentary government in the provinces and introduced it at the centre; on the other hand, it retained separate electorates both provincial and central, distributing the seats on the lines of the "Communal Award".

- (6) As to the Dominion Status, it was officially declared that the provisions of the Act, which precluded full self-government, were to be regarded as transitional and it was intimated that mainly by usage and convention, India under the new constitution might quickly acquire the freedom, both internal and external like other members of the British Commonwealth.¹

The Act at first got criticism from the members of the British Parliament. Attlee, the leader of the Labour Party in Parliament, argued that "no legislation for the better government of India will be satisfactory which does not secure the goodwill and co-operation of the Indian people by recognising explicitly India's right to Dominion Status and by providing within it the means of its attainment."² Moreover, Attlee pointed out that the Bill had been rejected by all the live movements in India.³

With the declaration of the Government of India Act 1935, the Indian history takes a new turn. While the Congress rejected the Act of 1935 and resolved "not to submit to it both inside and outside the legislature so as to end it",⁴ there was an influential section within the Congress itself which felt that the provincial portion of the Act should be permitted to function. The Congressmen showed their desirability of contesting the elections for the provincial legislatures, but there was difference of opinion on the issue of "acceptance of office". The Congress finally in December, 1936, decided to contest the elections to the provincial legislatures due early in 1937, but it postponed decision on the controversial question of "accep-

1 R. Coupland, *Indian Politics* (Madras, 1944), pp. vii-viii.

2 Proceedings, *House of Commons Debates* (Lahore, 1935), series 5, vol. 297, col. 1167.

3 *Ibid.*

4 N N. Mura, *Indian Annual Register* (Calcutta, 1936), vol. 1, pp. 243-9, and vol. 2, pp. 27-28.

tance of office" till the result of the elections.⁵

The Government of India Act 1935, provided for an All India Federation of autonomous provinces and states. The Federal Government was to be established after the native states decided to join it and to nominate one half of the 104 members of the Federal Council. Sind and Orissa were created as separate provinces. It was planned that even large provinces would be directed by the Governors and six small provinces would be under Commissioners; autonomy was granted to the provinces with certain essential safeguards vested in the Governors. The Governor-General was to be the head of the Federal Government and was to be appointed by the British Government for five years. At the Centre the old dyarchy was to continue added with a new provision that the Governor-General was to be advised by 3 members appointed by himself in Defence and External Affairs. Thus, the Defence and the External Affairs were reserved subjects for the control of the Governor General. Further, the Governor General was to be invested with some special responsibilities to prevent grave menace to the peace and tranquility of India, to safeguard the financial stability and credit of the Federal Government, and to safeguard the rights of the minorities. Besides, a Federal Parliament was to be established consisting of two Houses—(a) The Council of State with 156 members from the British India (150 elected plus 6 nominated by the Governor-General) and 104 members from the native states totalling 260 (it was to be a permanent body, but 1/3 were to retire every year); (b) The House of Assembly with 250 members from British India and 125 from the native states totalling 375. These members were elected for five years by the Provincial Legislatures.

Franchise was to be extended to 6 million women and 29 million men. This meant that 14 per cent of the total population, 27 per cent of the female population and 43 per cent of the adult male population could vote.⁶

⁵ S.R. Misra, in C.H. Philips, ed., *The Partition of India* (London, 1970), p. 113-9.

⁶ Saday Alk, ed., *Congress and the Minority Problem* (Allahabad, 1947), p. 170.

The Congress opposed the Act of 1935. It opposed the Act because it did not represent the will of the Indian nation, as it was designed to facilitate and perpetuate the domination and exploitation of the Indians, and was accompanied by widespread repression and suppression of civil liberties.

Nehru described the Act as a "Charter of Slavery".⁷ In his Presidential Address to the Lucknow Session of the Indian National Congress in March, 1936, he declared that the new constitution offered India only responsibility without power, and, therefore, deserved to be rejected "in its entirety". But, as he sensed the mood of the party, he did not oppose Congress participation in the elections. Though there were anti-national elements in the Government of India Act, the Congress was preparing for an experiment. The Presidential Address on the 27th December, 1936 in the Faizpur Session of the Congress clarifies the situation: "The Government of India Act of 1935, the new constitution, stares at us offensively, this new charter of bondage which has been imposed upon us despite our utter rejection of it, and we are preparing to fight elections under it."⁸

Further, Nehru declared: "With the effort to fight the Act of 1935, and as a corollary to it, we have to stress our positive demand for a Constituent Assembly elected under adult suffrage. That is the very corner-stone of Congress policy today."⁹ This was thus clear that Congress was not totally opposed to the idea of a federation as Nehru in the same year explained the aims and objects of the Congress and said that the Congress was not fully against the conception of a federation, but the present model of federation which came under the control—politically and socially—and seemed to be the most backward elements in the country.¹⁰ A reference may be made here of a mass meeting that was held in Allahabad on the 29th April, 1935 which was attended by some bonafide candidates of the Congress, like Nehru, Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose and Rajagopalachari. In this mass meeting they explained the British aim of the

⁷ B.R. Nanda, in C.H. Philips, ed., *The Partition of India*, n. 5, p. 149.

⁸ Mitra, n. 4, Vol. 2, p. 226.

⁹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (London, 1942), pp. 422-3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Government of India Act and their own position regarding this new problem. Rajagopalachari said that according to the British thought, by passing the Government of India Act everything had been done, but the Bill was going through its fourth and most important reading now, namely, that it had been brought in close touch with the electorates which had expressed confidence in the Congress. He added that the British people had to realize that the people of India had now a voice in the matter and once this could be realized the whole structure must crumble down.¹¹

The Congress was conscious enough to maintain its stand. At the same time it came to the decision of fighting the election. It declared its aim :

...we go to the Legislature not to co-operate with the apparatus of British imperialism, but to combat the Act and seek to end it, and to resist in every way British imperialism in its attempt to strengthen its hold on India and its exploitation of the Indian people.¹²

The Government of India Act by no means left the other Indian parties unaffected. A reactionary wind blew towards Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, N.L. Federation etc.

The All India Muslim League at its 24th session held in April, 1936 at Bombay passed a resolution recording its emphatic protest against forcing a constitution on the people of India. This session was as radical as the Congress session of Fairpur. S.W. Hasan in his Presidential address declared:

A Constitution provided by the Act of 1935 is literally being forced on us by the British Parliament. . . a monstrosity has been invented and is being presented to India in the garb of this Constitution Act. It is anti-democratic, it will strengthen all the most reactionary elements in the country and instead of helping us to develop on progressive lines, it

11 *Fortnightly Reports*, Government of India, File No. 11/4,32, National Archives, New Delhi.

12 *Jawaharal Nehru*, n. 9, pp. 422-3.

will enchain and crush the forces making for democracy and freedom.¹³

Jinnah, the sole leader of the Muslim League, also showed his protest to the Act and vehemently opposed the federal part of the Act, calling it "fundamentally bad, most reactionary, retrograde, injurious and fatal."¹⁴

Regarding the League's refusal of the federal part of the Act, Rajendra Prasad opined that the federal scheme was condemned by Jinnah because --

it was calculated to thwart and delay indefinitely the realization of India's most cherished goal of complete responsible government, and because it was unworkable in the interests of India and not because by conceding a Federal Constitution or in any other way it injured the interests of Mussalmans as such.¹⁵

Jinnah, however, was likely to accept the provincial part of the Act. Expressing his reaction over this provincial part of the Act, Jinnah stated:

...The Provincial scheme of the Constitution be utilized for what it is worth, in spite of the most objectionable feature contained therein, which render real control, responsibility of Ministry and Legislature over entire field of Government and administration nugatory. . .¹⁶

The Hindu Mahasabha also criticized the Act, mainly for its part of the Communal Award. There is not much relevance and room to go into detail about the reactions of the Hindu Mahasabha or other equivalent parties.

The N.L. Federation, in spite of its all criticism, decided to accept the Act. Regarding the attitude of the Congress and the

13 Mitra, n. 4, p. 294.

14 *Ibid.*

15 Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided* (Bombay, 1947), p. 142.

16 *Mitra*, n. 4, p. 295.

League, while the Congress was expressing its view of full rejection, the Muslim League rejected it partly. But at last, it is surprising to note that both the parties were enchanted to the lure of power. H.V. Hodson remarked: "The Congress contested the elections explicitly in order not to work the Act but to combat and destroy it. The Muslim League, while equally opposed to the federal provisions, fought in order to use the provincial part of Act 'for what it was worth'."¹⁷

Election View under the Congress

In order to organize the campaign of election, the Working Committee of the Congress appointed a Parliamentary Committee in April, 1936, consisting of the seven following persons with the President of all Provincial Congress Committees and Khan Sahib:

- (1) Rajendra Prasad
- (2) Bhulabhai Desai
- (3) Abul Kalam Azad
- (4) C. Rajagopalachari
- (5) Vallabhbhai Patel
- (6) Acharya Narendra Dev, and
- (7) Govind Ballabh Pant (as convenor).

The All India Congress Committee adopted the election manifesto which drew attention to the increasing poverty of the country, the progressive deterioration of the conditions of all classes, the progressive deterioration of the conditions of all classes, the national movement and government repression, the rejection of the undesirable constitution of 1935, and its replacement by a constitution framed by a constituent assembly elected by the people. It declared that the Congress legislators' aim would be to end the acts, ordinances, and regulations which oppressed the people to establish civil liberty, to release political prisoners, and to repair the wrongs done to the

¹⁷ H.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide* (New York, 1971) p. 12.

peasantry.¹⁸ It declared its future programme as (1) the transformation of the agrarian system, scaling down of rural debts, providing cheap credit, (2) the improvement of the standards of living of industrial labour, (3) the removal of set disabilities, (4) the uplift of the scheduled castes, (5) the encouragement of hand-spinning and hand-weaving and other village industries, (6) the search for an agreed solution of the communal problem; in short, "to free India, end the exploitation of the people and build up a strong and prosperous and united nation, resting on the well-being of the masses."¹⁹

Jawaharlal Nehru, in his Presidential address, said:

The major problem of India today is that of the land—of rural poverty and unemployment and a thoroughly out of date land system. A curious combination of circumstances has held India back during the past few generations and the political and economic governments it wears are no longer fit and are torn and tattered.²⁰

Similarly the Congress raised the movement of mass contact to capture the maximum number of seats. But the movement of mass contact raised the difficult problem of Muslims within the narrow walls of communal electorates now played its obstructive role, and presented a dilemma which proved insoluble. The only way in which the Muslim electors could be approached was either to set up Muslim candidates who belonged to the Congress organisation or to enter into an understanding with the Muslim political party which had a programme similar to that of the Congress.

But since the relations between the Congress and the Muslims had become harsh with the break up of the unity conference, in 1928, according to Tarachand, it was not practicable for the Congress to have any understanding with the Muslim political

18 Tarachand, *History of the Freedom Movement* (New Delhi, 1972), Vol. 4, p. 218.

19 *Ibid*

20 Proceedings, *Indian National Congress*, Lucknow Session, 12 April 1936

party.

Here some doubts arise about the intentions of the Congress leaders. The factors approve that the Congress leaders knowingly avoided the co-operation of the Muslim League. They ignored the Muslim leaders and underestimated their strength. While Jinnah, apart from his all differences with the Congress, still intended to make a rapprochement with the Congress and to solve the communal problem.²¹ Had the Congress leaders watched the nerves of the time carefully, the Muslim leaders could have been convinced and the Muslim masses might have been won permanently which they, after all, could not do.

Muslim Elections

At the time of election, the position of the Muslim politics was confused. Both the Muslim Conference and the Muslim League were in a state of suspended animation. Besides Muslim League there were so many Muslim organisations during that time. In Punjab Fazli Hussain's Unionist Party, in Bengal Fazl-ul-Haq's Krishak Praja Party, in Uttar Pradesh the Nationalist Agriculturist Party of Nawab of Chhatari, in Sind Abdullah Harun's Independent Party, in the North West Frontier Province Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan who had affiliated his party to the Congress, had created difficulties in the way of expansion of All India Muslim League.

However, Jinnah's first object was to put a new life into the Muslim politics. In the beginning, however, he got little response from the Muslim citizens.²² Nonetheless, the League authorized Jinnah to form a Central Election Board of 35 members under his Presidentship for contesting the provincial elections. Jinnah selected the members of the Board from all over India. Among the names chosen, there were members of the Muslim Unity Board who represented the nationalist Muslim group, a number of Khilafatists, Ahrars and members of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema. The five members of the Unity Board were—Shaukat Ali, Khaliquzzaman, Humam

²¹ Tarabhandi, n. 19, p. 221.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 221.

Ahmad Madni, Kifayat Ullah and Ahmad Said.²³

The Board held its first meeting at Lahore on the 8th June, 1936 and adopted the election manifesto, which declared that the League stood for "full responsible government for India", deplored the enactment of the Constitution of 1935, accepted the Communal Award, but rejected the Federal Provincial Constitution, and defined the programme for election as under:

To protect religious rights, to secure repeal of all repressive laws; to reject all measures which are detrimental to the interest of India, which encroach upon the fundamental liberties of the people and lead to economic exploitation of the country; to reduce the heavy cost of administrative machinery, central and provincial...to stand for social, educational and economic uplift of the rural population;...to protect and promote the Urdu language and script to devise measures for the amelioration of the general condition of the Mussalman; and to take steps to relieve the heavy burden of taxation and create healthy public opinion and general political consciousness throughout the country.²⁴

At the time of election, Jinnah was trying to pass through the two dilemmas. On the one hand, he tried for a rapprochement with the Congress, as he said in March, 1936: "Let me assure you that there has been no change in me, not the slightest, since the day when I joined the Indian National Congress. It might be I have been wrong on some occasions, but it has never been done in a partisan spirit."²⁵ On the other hand, he wanted to bring the Muslim League parallel to the Congress to make its position unchallenging. He emphasized on the reorganization of the unity of the Muslim masses. During the election campaign itself, Jinnah had started putting forward his main point which he was to reiterate and emphasize later that Congress should not challenge the position of the Muslim League. Inaugurating the Muslim League election campaign in Bengal, he warned the

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

²⁴ Mitra, n. 4, Vol. 1, p. 306.

²⁵ Zaidi, in C.H. Philips, ed., n. 5, pp. 249-50.

Congress thus:

I warn my Hindu friends and the Congress to leave the Moslems alone...We are not going to be the camp followers of any party or organisation. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is reported to have said in Calcutta that there are only two parties in the country, namely the Government and the Congress, and the others must line up. I refuse to line up with the Congress. There is a third party in this country and that is the Moslems. We are not going to be dictated by anybody.²⁶

Nehru was deeply disturbed by Jinnah's approach to Muslim politics and asserted that the League represented the upper middle classes only. Jinnah himself had admitted this fact once talking with Khaliquzzaman in 1936.²⁷ Nehru continued giving his statements in press in reply to Jinnah's statements and politics. His few statements are very much relevant here to know the present situation in its entirety. He gives his remarkable statements in 1937 under the title "Mr M.A. Jinnah and the Congress", which, while having been slightly separated from the main text, have been adduced below as an essential prerequisite of the present study.²⁸

x

x

x

Press Statement issued by Jawaharlal Nehru

June 30, 1937

Mr. M. A. Jinnah rightly pointed out in a statement some time ago that the Muslim League was a political body and that its policy and programme were very different from those of the Congress. I welcomed that statement for it cleared the issues.

²⁶ Cited in Khalid B. Sayeed, *Pakistan: the Formative Phase* (Karachi, 1968), p. 83.

²⁷ B. R. Nanda, in C. H. Philips, ed., n. 5, p. 154.

²⁸ *Jawaharlal Nehru Papers*, Teenmurti Library, New Delhi, 1937.

Today I have read an appeal issued by Mr. Jinnah with astonishment. This appeal is addressed to the voters of the Jhansi-Talam Hamirpur Muslim constituencies where a by-election is taking place for the provincial assembly. Two candidates are in the field, the Congress candidate Mr. Nisam Ahmed Khan Sherwani, and the Muslim League candidate, Mr. Rafiuddin. Both the organisations and candidates are fully justified in appealing to the electorate and placing their programme before it. The leaders of the Muslim League have issued many such appeals.

I want Nisam Ahmed Sherwani to win because he is a fine-upright man and he stands for Congress principles, for freedom, and for ending exploitations in India...

—Jawaharlal Nehru.

.....

(Another Statement)

July 3, 1937

Mr Jinnah has denied having issued any statement to the Jhansi Talam Hamirpur Muslim voters such as I referred to. I am glad to have his denial. But the Khulafat newspaper gives prominence to such a statement and various other newspapers have published translations of it. I understand that this statement with Mr. Jinnah's name attested to it is being distributed in Bundelkhand. I would suggest that Mr. Jinnah himself finds out who is responsible for this misuse of his name and should dissociate himself from the statement in question.

Mr. Jinnah complains of misrepresentation of the Muslim League and of himself by many Congressmen and by the Congress press. May I point out to him that there is no such thing as the Congress press in the sense that the Congress owns or controls newspaper. But if there is any misrepresentation on the part of any one, I am sorry for it and I shall gladly help in removing it if he will point out what and where it is.

(To call the Muslim League politically reactionary is a matter

of opinion and Mr. Jinnah cannot forbid us the liberty of holding to the opinions. It may be that our standards are different, but surely Mr Jinnah will not deny that many prominent members of the League have quite a remarkable record of reactionary political activity and of alliances with British imperialism against the Indian freedom movement.)

—Jawaharlal Nehru

.....

(Nehru's statement on the Relations between Jinnah and the Congress)

Mr. M. A. Jinnah and the Congress

...According to Mr. Jinnah, powerful Muslim organisations in Punjab and in Bengal, like the Ahrars and the Kisan Parties, being outside the fold of the Muslim League, are not really Muslim.

What exactly Mr. Jinnah would like us of the Congress to do with the large numbers of Muslims in the Congress, I do not know. Would he like us to ask them to resign and go on bended knees to him? And what shall I say to the great crowds of Muslim peasants and workers who come to listen to me? All this seems to me extraordinary and harmful doctrine and the most unjust to the Muslims. Between British imperialism and Indian nationalism he would have them remain as a political group apart, apparently playing off one against the other and seeking communal advantage even at the cost of the larger public good.

I am totally unable to think along these or any other communal lines, and with all deference to Mr Jinnah, may I suggest that such ideas are medieval and out of date. They bear no relation whatever to modern conditions and modern problems, which are essentially economic and political.

In what way are the interests of the Muslim peasants different from those of a Hindu peasant? Or those of a Muslim labourer or artisan or merchant or landlord or manufacturer different

from those of his Hindu prototype?...To encourage a communal consideration of political and economic problems is to encourage reaction and go back to the Middle Ages.

The realities of today are poverty and hunger and unemployment and the conflict between British imperialism and Indian nationalism. How are these to be considered communally?

...The Congress represents Indian nationalism and is thus charged with a historic destiny. Because of this, it is the only organisation which has developed a vast prestige in India and the strength and will to stand up against British imperialism. Thus in the final analysis there are only two forces in India today—British imperialism and the Congress representing Indian nationalism. There are other vital forces in the country, representing a new social outlook, but they allied to the Congress. The communal groupings have no such real importance in spite of occasional importance being thrown upon them.

Mr. Jinnah leads a party in a Legislative Assembly. The members of that party have shown the most remarkable independence of each other and of the party. Why is that so? Because no common principle or policy binds them and at the touch of any real problem they break apart. That must also be the inevitable fate of communal parties....

What does the Muslim League stand for? Does it stand for the independence of India, for anti-imperialism? I believe not. It represents a group of Muslims no doubt, highly estimable persons but functioning in the higher regions of the upper middle classes and having no contacts with the Muslim masses and few even with the Muslim lower middle classes. May I suggest to Mr. Jinnah that I came into greater touch with the Muslim masses than most of the members of the Muslim League? I know more about their hunger and poverty and misery than those who talk in terms of percentages and seats in the councils and places in the state service. I have had vast Muslim audiences in Punjab and elsewhere. They did not ask me about the communal problem or percentages or separate electorates. They were intensely interested in the burden of land revenue or rent, of debt, of water rates, of unemployment and of many other burdens they carry.

As President of the Congress I have the honour and privilege

to represent the innumerable Muslims throughout the country who have taken a valiant part in the struggle for freedom, who have suffered for the great cause of independence and who have stood shoulder to shoulder with others in our historic fight under the banner of the Congress.

I represent the many brave Muslim comrades who still stand in the front ranks of our forces and who have been true to the Congress through the strain and stress of past years. I represent the hunger and poverty of the masses, Muslim as well as Hindu; the demand for bread and land and work and relief from innumerable burdens which crush them...I represent all this because Congress represents it....

The Congress welcomes all co-operation; it has repeatedly stressed the need for a joint front against imperialism. It will co-operate with pleasure with Muslim League as with other organisations, but the basis of this co-operation must be anti-imperialism and the good of the masses...It knows that the masses, Hindu and Muslim care little for communal questions. They demand urgently and consistently economic relief in order to obtain this political freedom.

Jawaharlal Nehru
January 10, 1937.

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Press Statement issued by Jawaharlal Nehru

July 20, 1937

Mr Jinnah stated that even the Congress was to agree to the formula evolved by him and Rajendra Babu during their Delhi conversations two years ago. It is admitted that Babu Rajendra Prasad agreed to the formula. It is further clear that Rajendra Babu, the then President of the Congress, assured Mr Jinnah that he could get the Congress as an organisation to accept it, and he did so after consulting several members of the Working Committee, who were in Delhi at the time. Rajendra Babu could deliver the goods so far as the

Congress was concerned. It is true that Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and some members of the Bengal Nationalist Party did not accept that formula. But it is equally true that their opposition would not have prevented the Congress from accepting it. Mr. Jinnah will remember that the Bengal Nationalist Party was opposing the Congress in many matters and indeed had run candidates in opposition to Congress candidates during the elections to the Central Assembly. Therefore for Mr. Jinnah to say today that even the Congress rejected that formula is entirely incorrect and I am surprised that does not appreciate this potent fact. The Congress would have certainly accepted it or the recommendation of its President and the Working Committee. But Mr. Jinnah wanted the nationalist party also to agree. This they would not do and Rajendra Babu had no authority to speak for them.

Because of this Mr. Jinnah did not consider it worthwhile to proceed with the matter, although Rajendra Babu was *perfectly prepared to place it before the Congress and get its formal assent*. This is the sequence of events and if Mr. Jinnah will consider it carefully, he will no doubt realise that his statements on this issue have been far from correct and he has been doing an injustice not only to those whom he has sought to criticise, but also to himself. This is past history, but the present holds us, and I am still waiting to know what Mr. Jinnah's reactions are to the methods adopted on behalf of the Muslim League in the recent Bundelkhand election. He has denied the notice issued in his name. Does he also disagree with its contents? If not, may we presume that this is his and the Muslim League's political platform?

—Jawaharlal Nebru

Allahabad,
July 20, 1937.

.....

Elections to the legislatures of autonomous provinces were held in February and March, 1937. The electorate by that

time had jumped from seven million to thirty seven million which included women also. Indian National Congress, the largest organized party of that time, took part in it along with the Muslim League and several other Indian parties. The Congress fairly won the polls in six provinces—the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, Bihar, Madras, Orissa and Bombay. Whatever the cause of its victory might be, the triumph of the Congress was described by the Governor of the United Provinces that the villagers were conscious of the transition of power. As they felt that the British raj was weakening and that the Congress raj was coming, they threw themselves on the winning side.²⁹

The results of the 1937 elections underlined the fact that while the Hindus enjoyed an overwhelming numerical superiority in almost all the provinces in which they were in majority, the Muslims did not enjoy the same superiority in at least two of the provinces in which they were in majority, namely Punjab and Bengal. These provinces accounted for forty million out of the eighty million Muslims in British India. This meant, according to the calculations of the Muslim communalists, that while the Hindus would dominate all the Hindu majority provinces, the Muslims could not be sure of dominating two of the Muslim majority provinces, which they considered to be their mainstays. Unpromising as the situation was in the provinces from the point of view of the Muslim League, it was likely to be far worse in the future federation of India, for there the Muslims had only one third of the total seats allotted to British India. If the last elections were any indication, the Congress was sure to capture the majority of the non-Muslim seats of British India and if it succeeded in coercing the Princes (the vast majority of whom were Hindus anyway) it would capture most of the seats allotted to the states in the federal legislature.³⁰

The Muslim League and Jinnah did not fail to learn its situation. According to Khaliquzzaman, Jinnah told him in February, 1936, that the Muslim League "consisted mostly of

²⁹ Hodson, n. 17, p. 62.

³⁰ Nanda, in C.H. Philps, ed., n. 5, p. 149.

big landlords title holders and selfish people who looked to their class personal interests more than to communal and national interests and who had always been ready to sacrifice them to suit British policies."³¹

Just after the Congress won the election, a controversy arose within the Congress itself as to whether it should accept the office. By the time the Congress was divided into two wings—the radical and the liberal, the radical wing was deadly opposed to this, as Nehru exclaimed that the acceptance of office would mean to co-operate with British imperialism. On the other hand, the liberal leaders persuaded the radical leaders to form the Ministry in the winning provinces. According to such leaders, only by this way the Congress could come closer to the masses and could manipulate social reforms. At last victory softened the opposition. On the 18th March, 1937, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution reiterating the Congress policy of combating the 1935 Constitution and demanded that it should be withdrawn, and concluded that in pursuance of this policy—

The All India Congress Committee authorizes and permits the acceptance of office in provinces where the Congress commands a majority in the Legislature, provided that Ministerships shall not be accepted unless the leader of the Congress Party in the Legislature is satisfied and is able to state publicly that the Governor will not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of ministers in regard to their constitutional activities.³²

The Governors were unable to give such an assurance. Then, as decided previously, the Congress refused to accept the invitation of the Governor to form its ministries. After refusing office, the Congress turned its attention towards condemning the new constitution. The situation was swinging on the other extreme; therefore, the then Indian Secretary and the Governor had no other way but to clarify that extra-ordinary powers.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 154.

32 Mitra, n 4, vol. I, 1937, pp. 1977-8

of the Governor were only meant for exceptional use and the gubernatorial interference had never been contemplated in the day-to-day administration.³³ The Congress eventually changed its mind. Mahatma Gandhi, the engine of the Congress body, declared the acceptance of the office on the 18th March, 1937. This acceptance caused the Congress to face vehement criticism from the opposition. The Governor General's assurance, of course, did not follow the pattern prescribed by the Congress, yet it proceeded. In the meantime the Muslim League had already accepted the office without asking for any assurance.

Later on in July, 1937, the Congress decided to form ministries as a result of the discussions which had taken place in the meantime. There was another complicated question before the Congress of forming coalition ministries with the Muslim League. Any such question was out of question in provinces where the League had no representation at all, viz., Bihar, Orissa and the Central provinces. Therefore, an effort was made in the United Provinces and Bombay, but with no success. The Congress, however, decided to apply the well-known and well-understood constitutional principle of having homogeneous ministries composed of its own members where Muslims were, of course, included. It accordingly chose Muslim ministers from among those who were members of the Congress Party. There followed an episode still more tangibly and permanently damaging the confidence of the Muslims outside the Congress. Before the elections, it was expected that Muslim League members would be brought into coalition with the Congress in forming governments in provinces. As it had appeared outwardly during the election time, the League was likely to come closer to the Congress. Jinnah once expressed his unhappiness to think that the Indian National Congress was of the opinion that "the Muslim League is composed of toadies...it is in alliance with the imperialistic power."³⁴ At the Lucknow session of the All India Muslim League, he declared: "The Muslim League stands for full national democratic self-government for India."³⁵

33 Abdul Hamid, *Muslim Separatism* (Punjab, 1967), p. 216.

34 M. Norman, *Rise and Growth of All India Muslim League* (Allahabad, 1941), p. 336.

35 *Mata*, n. 4, Vol. 2, 1937, p. 403.

But after the election all the harmonies were changed into hostility between them. Though the election manifestoes of the Congress and the League differed scarcely in their practical programmes of social and agrarian reform, or in the principle of opposition to British rule and to the federal part of the Constitution, their sharpest difference laid in the League's implicit stress on maintaining the safeguard of separate electorates for minorities.

The Governors also wished to have collective responsibility but the achievement of clear majorities by the Congress changed the picture. The Governor's wish for minority representation could be fulfilled with Congress Muslims without bringing in the League.

As has been stated above, in two provinces—the United Provinces and Central Provinces—the coalition ministry was tried to be formed. The Congress Parliamentary sub-committee suggested that the U.P. League members may become part of the Congress Party, subject to its (Congress) control and discipline. The League regarded it as suicidal condition and disagreed. Ultimately, the United Provinces Ministry was formed with two Muslims—one the Congress Muslim, and the other a deserted League member. In the Central Provinces the Congress Government also included a Muslim Leaguer, and in Bombay a Muslim independent.

It is important to review the background of the efforts for negotiations between the Congress and the League on the U.P. issue. The crucial question was not whether the U.P. Cabinet should have one or two representatives of the Muslim League,³⁶ but whether the Provincial Cabinet after the induction of the League members, would be able to maintain its cohesion. The most important consideration with the Provincial Congress leaders was that if the Muslim League with its landlords' support came into the Cabinet, the Congress programme for agrarian reform, particularly the abolition of zamindari, would be jeopardised.³⁷ Some critics blamed the Congress for its refusal to form coalition ministries with the

36 Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (Delhi, 1959), p. 161.

37 Nanda, in C.H. Philips, ed., n. 5, p. 155.

Muslim League in 1937. It has been said that the Congress because of its "intoxication of victory" or its foolish adherence to "orthodox parliamentarianism", "socialism" and "totalitarianism" lost a great opportunity in 1937 of winning over the Muslim League by unceremoniously turning down the latter's offer of coalition.³⁸

Azad seemed to think the Congress refusal to allow the Muslim League representatives to join the U.P. Congress Cabinet was largely dictated by the fact that the Congress was not prepared to give two places to the Muslim League in the Cabinet. The Congress would have given one place to the Muslim League had the latter agreed. Azad blamed Nehru for not being generous towards the Muslim League, an attitude which was partly responsible for the creation of Pakistan.³⁹

The three points related to the matters which were the causes of disputes are in short stated below:

- (1) The approval of the Congress to fight the elections of 1937 in order to propagate the Congress ideal of *swaraj*, and later to accept office, with the ostensible aim of wrecking the constitution of 1935. The League's view was identical—as to achieve full responsible sub-government or *swaraj*, but the League wanted to enter into office to work the constitution for what it was worth. Jinnah considered the Congress attitude hypocritical and unrealistic. He pointed out that in 1923 the Swaraj Party had put forward the same aim, but in practice, its conduct belied its profession.

The subsequent functioning of the Congress Ministries in the provinces proved that Jinnah was right.

- (2) Concerning the Communal Award, the attitude of the Congress was neither of approval nor of disapproval, but of striving for a voluntary settlement between the communities. The League wanted that the Award should be accepted provisionally.

38 R. Coupland, *The Indian Politics* (Madras, 1944), pp. 110-12.

39 Azad, n. 34, pp. 160-2.

- (3) The greatest difficulty was caused by the Congress refusal to recognize the independent entity of the Muslim League, and behind it that of the Muslim community as a political group or nationality.⁴⁰ Obviously there were great misunderstandings.

Evidences show that there was not any understanding between the Congress and the League about the elections or the coalition ministries to be formed after the elections of 1937.⁴¹ The League took it as a lesson for future and regarded the Congress as its opponent.

Though from the "Congress" point of view, it by no means dealt unjustly with the Muslim League, Lord Zetland hinted that in the matter of appointment to the ministries of the Muslims as such, the other minorities had more than their proportionate share.

Of the 71 Ministers of the 11 provinces, 26 were Muslims, 10 of the other minority communities and 35 Hindus. Of the 35 Ministers in the "Hindu Congress Provinces", 6 were Muslims and 5 of the other minority communities. Some time later, the Congress formed coalition ministries in two more provinces—the North West Frontier Province and Assam. That increased the number of Muslim Ministers still further. In the North West Frontier Province, 3 out of the 4 ministers including the Prime Minister, Khan Saheb, were Muslims, while in Assam there were 3 Muslim and 5 non-Muslim Ministers. These figures easily disprove the sweeping and fantastic assertions made by the League apologists.⁴²

Thus the Congress accepted ministry about the middle of July, 1937 as authorized by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress.⁴³ Lord Linlithgow, however, remarked that it was mandatory upon the Governor to accept the advice of his ministries.⁴⁴

The Congress Party thus entered upon its official career in July, 1937 and it remained in power till the end of 1939.

40 Tarachand, n. 18, p. 234.

41 *Ibid.*

42 Mehta and Patwardhan, *The Communal Triangle* (Bombay, 1942), p. 114.

43 Mitra, n. 4, vol. I, 1937, pp. 47-48.

44 *Ibid.*

It is remarkable to note that a new chapter in the communal controversy opened with the formation of Congress Ministries in the provinces. Whenever the Congress was engaged in struggles with the British imperialism, the communal organizations went into the background and even fell into discredit. But a new situation arose when the Congress instead of fighting those in authority, itself became installed in seats of power.

However, the above mentioned statement is not full correct in the initial days of the Congress Ministry. It was very much popularized among the people—Hindus and Muslims. As soon as the Congress took the office, the Working Committee of the All India Congress Party during its meeting from the 26th October to 1st November, 1937 resolved to protect minority rights and fundamental rights of the people. The main characteristics of its resolutions are as follows:

- (1) Every citizen of India would have the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for the purpose not opposed to law and morality;
- (2) Every citizen to enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practice his religion, subject to public order and morality; and
- (3) The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas would be protected. All citizens were declared equal before law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed and sex. Next was that no disability would attach to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling. The equal rights and duties were declared for all citizens in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort, maintained out of State or local funds dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public. Every citizen was regarded free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to acquire property and to follow any trade or calling, and to be treated equally

with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India. Last, but not the least, resolution was about the franchise which was decided to be on the basis of universal adult suffrage.⁴⁵

All such declarations were the pillar principles of the Congress Ministries, and they had to build their administration on. Undoubtedly, the Congress had begun its new career with a glorious victory in hand. But it should always be kept in mind that the power bestowed upon it, was by no means a bed of roses. In true sense, it was appearing before the "agni pariksha".⁴⁶ On the one hand, the Congress had the object of wrecking the Constitution from within and exposing its reactionary character, and on the other, it was trying to wipe out the communal tension from India. The tasks were not so easy as the critics regarded. However, the Congress on its part tried its best to achieve its objects.

Before we deal with the contributions and achievements of the Congress Ministries, we must be aware of the fact that under the Congress rule, the power did not vest in the regular organs of the Constitution. The Ministries were responsible neither to the electorate nor to the legislatures. They were the liegemen of the Congress Executive, called the Working Committee, which appointed and dismissed ministers, dictated policies and laid down procedures. Moreover, the day-to-day working of the Ministries was scrutinized by regional supervisors, collectively called the Parliamentary Board, which derived its authority from the Working Committee. It was also alleged by the critics that the leadership was supplied by Gandhi. The Government sought his advice on almost every occasion, whether there was a constitutional crisis, a tussle with the Governor, or an issue of general policy. More surprisingly his name did not even appear on the party roll.⁴⁷ Due to this monolithic character of its body politic, the Congress was accused of bringing the "totalitarianism in India" which was just contradictory to its principles. It appears that the above-mentioned criticism does

45 Sadiq Ali, n. 6, pp. 127-8.

46 A Symbol for appearing in hard examination.

47 Abdul Hamid, n. 33, p. 218.

not have any significance in so far as the present study is concerned. The activities of the Congress as a whole are to be studied here. The Congress governments started to announce their formula and policies regarding their administration. They took a number of problems to deal with. Though this Chapter does not concern to go in detail with all these problems, yet some of its principal features may briefly be noted, e.g. the social and economic reforms. The governments were very much conscious to uplift the people of India from social and economic darkness. Nehru was so much concerned with the economic issue that he denied the existence of a Hindu-Muslim problem. But ironically enough, in social and economic reforms, which was the substantive purpose of provincial self-government from the popular Indian viewpoint, the ministries were handicapped by financial stringency as well as the need to balance the interests of different sections of the Indian community. The Congress ministries had naturally no other way but to popularize itself by oral propagandas and future assurances.

The next item was to popularize the tricolour flag as the national flag and the "Bande Matram" as the national anthem. One other programme was to establish Wardha Scheme of basic education and to manipulate the Vidya Mandir scheme of the Central Province as well.

One more important item of the Congress Government was to ignore the Hindu-Urdu controversy and to popularize Hindi as the national language. It is very much obvious that the Congress did never succeed in its efforts to solve the Language problem as this problem is still in existence. But the most vital of all programmes and duties before the Congress was to prevent the communal riots. It meant that the governments had to bring harmony between Hindus and Muslims. What did the Congress do then to solve this problem and to maintain the law and order accordingly, was the mass contact, mainly the Muslim mass contact, and a minute study with which this chapter is mainly concerned.

The Congress, time and again, declared its anxiety for the right of ministries thus :

The Congress has solemnly and repeatedly declared its policy

in regard to the rights of minorities in India and has stated that it considers its duty to protect those rights and ensured the widest possible scope for the development of those minorities and their participations in the fullest measure in political, economic and cultural life of the nation. The objective of the Congress is an independent and united India where no class or group or majority or minority may exploit another to its own advantage and where all the elements in the nation may co-operate together for the common good and advancement of the people of India.⁴⁸

The Congress after its glorious result of the election realized that "the election made it perfectly clear that the wider the mass appeal the greater was our success."

Though Nehru acknowledged that the Congress had not done so well in Muslim constituencies, he gave the following reasons for it :

Partly this is due to our own timidity as we ran few Muslim candidates. The burden of running over a thousand candidates (in the general constituencies) was great and we did not wish to add to it. If we had run more Muslim candidates, I trust we could have had a fair measure of success, especially in the rural areas—⁴⁹

Nehru felt that the young Muslim generation was more liberal and reasonable than the old generation. He expected that "the communal position is definitely bright...The Muslim communal leaders still function, but their position weakens, for they have no reply to the question of poverty, hunger and unemployment and independence that their own people put to them."⁵⁰

Nevertheless, the Congress leaders tried to gain faith in Muslim League. Some of them, including Rajagopalachari, Pant and even Gandhi, tried to convince the League about their high purpose

⁴⁸ Hodson, n. 17, p. 71.

⁴⁹ R.J. Moor, in C.H. Philips, ed., n. 5, p. 71.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

for unification of India by saying "we are not interested in power, let Muslims would have it [or] we shall gladly exchange Muslim rule with British rule." Accordingly, a number of mass meetings and propaganda media were arranged to gain the confidence of the other Muslim parties including the Muslim masses. On the 29th April, 1937 a mass meeting was held in Allahabad which was presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru and other members of the Congress Working Committee. In the meeting, Subhas Chandra Bose thanked the Muslims who had always sided with the Congress in larger issues. Sardar Patel urged the people to support the Congress whole-heartedly so that the Congress might achieve its objects.⁵¹ On the same day, *Searchlight*, a daily newspaper published from Patna, published a statement issued by Syed Mahmud, a prominent Congress member of the Bihar Assembly. Mahmud in his statement expressed his full confidence in the Congress and abused those Muslim parties or leaders who deliberately misapprehended the Congress policy. Moreover, he challenged only such Muslim leaders as never tried, nor intended to bring the two communities together under one fold.⁵²

Obviously, such meetings and statements drew the attention of the Muslim public towards the Congress. It would not be irrelevant here to note that before the Congress gained power, the Congress was continuing its Muslim mass contact movement and it was getting comparative success too. There are evidences that the Muslim youngsters were willing to join the Congress in the beginning of 1937. The Muslim Youth League sent such letters to the President of the Indian National Congress.⁵³ A Muslim editor, Maulvi Muzibur Rahman, was a very good propagator of the Congress activities.⁵⁴ Similarly, a letter from A. Ahmad, a Muslim citizen, to Ashraf finds its relevance here.

51 Confidential Reports, Home Department, File No. 42036, National Archives, New Delhi, 1936.

52 *Ibid*.

53 Records, *Private Letters*, Tismarti Library, New Delhi, 1937.

54 *Ibid*.

...It appears that Pandit Jawaharlal is thinking of organising our masses. I want to know from you whether the Congress Secretariat will take up the work seriously or it is mere paper propaganda.⁵⁵

It thus appears that the Muslim citizens were taking the Congress organization seriously and they were willing to join it. The Departmental Secretary, A.L.C.C. Allahabad, Ashraf, advised the Congress that it should publish its proceedings in provincial vernaculars so that the average Muslims might be acquainted with the principles and might feel encouraged to join the Congress.⁵⁶ A large number of letters came to the Congress offices from the Muslim community throughout India which generally meant an appreciation of the Congress policy and showed their inclination to join the Congress. A number of these letters prove that the demand of the admission forms to get admitted into the Congress Party reached appreciably high.⁵⁷ Some of the Muslim citizens were not able to propagate the Congress work. Nehru once presiding over the Congress session appreciated such Muslims as Abdul Gaffar Khan.⁵⁸ The Congress leaders further deputed workers to each and every provincial Congress office to enroll the Muslim masses as much as they could possibly do. It was reported by the British Government that in some of the provinces, under the rule of the Congress ministries, the Congress was anxiously working to have contact with the Muslim masses.⁵⁹

The Muslim mass contact sub-committee was established by the Calcutta Congress Committee, which worked to bring the Muslims closer to the Congress fold. Besides, the other provincial Congress Committees also contributed a great deal to this effect, e.g. Bihar Congress Provincial Congress Committee, Gopal Bag; the Bombay Chronicle Co. Ltd. founded sub committee for the Muslim contact; Bengal Congress Socialist Party,

55 *Ibid.*

56 Records, Confidential, n. 51.

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Ibid*

59 *Fortnightly Reports*, F. 18.9/1947, n. 11.

Calcutta, Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, Madras, Delhi Provincial Congress Committee, Nagar Congress Committee, Jhansi, Punjab Assembly Congress Party etc. A full-fledged programme for carrying on Congress work among the Muslim masses was adopted at a well-attended meeting of the Muslim Mass Contact Sub-Committee of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee held at the Congress House, where the programme included work among Muslim women, providing medical relief, night classes, reading rooms and popularising khadi and swadeshi among other things. These tentative programmes were as follows:

- (i) Two centres of work in general would be provided, one at Madanpura and the other at Dogri with facilities for work among the Muslim women also.
- (ii) To hold group as well as mass meetings to popularize Congress ideology and programmes among the Muslim masses. A reading room would also be provided.
- (iii) To popularize Khadi in Muslim localities to communicate with the Local Khadi Bhandar and the AISA to open branches in the localities concerned
- (iv) Working among women - a special programme of work among Muslim women - fortnightly meetings, social functions and study classes, supplying printed copies of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's article "On Congress and Mussalmans."⁶⁰

Thus, during those days it was sensed that the Muslim masses had begun to come forward to suffer for the sake of freedom on equal footing with the Hindu masses.

Of course, many Muslims had proved their loyalty to the nation and the Congress, at various satyagraha movements much earlier too. The Congress got some letters from Muslim citizens condemning the Muslim League for its policy of mis-propagating the Congress. Sir Muhammad Sher Khan, president, City Congress Committee, gave his statement condemning the League for misutilizing his name as:

“सबवार ‘अजीज हिन्द’ (ज़ांसी) तारीख १४ अप्रैल के अंक पृष्ठ ५ पर ...मेरे नाम से शायद लिखा है कि ‘मुसलमानों को कांग्रेस ने नहीं आना चाहिये’...जैसा कि नेहरू कोशिश कर रहे हैं...मैं इस पक्ष में नहीं हूँ”... यह मजमून एडीटर ने खुद अपनी तरफ से मेरे नाम किया है...मैंने ऐसा कोई मजमून एडीटर को नहीं दिया। बल्कि मैंने एक वयान एडीटर को दिया था कि मुसलमानों को ज्यादा से ज्यादा कांग्रेस के अन्दर पहुँचना चाहिये...स्वाजादी का सेहरा आपके हाथ है”।⁶¹

The statement clears the fact that the versions given by the pro-Congress people were misinterpreted by the members of the Muslim League. But at the same time it was also sensed that Congress was likely to win the faith of the Muslim masses. Another letter written by some A. Basi, is very much worth quoting as he has shown his heart-felt appreciation towards the Congress aim of freedom and unification of India. He has explained the average Muslim mentality about the Congress rule and its hatred for the Muslim League theory. Moreover, he has suggested in his letter to the Congress, in the following few lines, to enable the Congress to gain the support of the Muslims:

...The mass contact is really a step forward towards cementing the relations of two great communities of India on whose co-operation depends the freedom of Motherland. With this idea in view, interested persons have created an unusual stir in some quarters and so far as the Muslim masses are concerned, a very horrible picture has been drawn before their eyes and they are made to believe in the so-called dangers of a Hindu Raj and total estimation of Muslim culture and religion.⁶²

Again, he says for the Muslim League:

...Muslim Leaguers...have no claim to represent Muslim masses...I level the charges against Muslim League members, did they ever think of establishing contact with Muslim

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

masses by visiting them personally? What have they done to improve their financial conditions? Poor fellows have never seen the faces of those who claim to represent them in the Government of the country...⁶³

Basi claimed that to rouse the religious fanaticism of Muslim masses, minor incidents are given undue prominence, and by giving religious colour to such incidents, miscreants have been successful in creating a wide gulf between the two communities. He hoped that the movement of Muslim mass contact might lessen this gulf. Here, it is not possible to put the content of his letter in detail, but one should not hesitate to say that this letter only might have thrown full light on Muslim mass mentality which could have enlightened the Congress path to solve the vital communal problem.

There is no doubt that during the period, Muslims as a community were most backward—backward from several points of view, socially, economically, academically and their blind religious outlook. The task to enlighten them was, in the true sense of term, stupendous and required a careful handling and courage on the part of the Congress workers. The Congress upto then was devoting its full attention on political matters and as such it could not pay more attention towards social reforms of these communities. Whatever the reasons there might be, the consequences proved that it did leave some stones unturned in settling the communal problem to the satisfaction of all. It was more pitiable that the Congress in provinces where it had majority, could not find suitable Muslims to be entrusted with the work of administration. This gave opponents of the Congress a chance to proclaim before the country that Muslims as a whole were aloof from the national movement. Therefore, steps in this direction instead of cornering the opponents went a long way to convince those Muslims who were still doubtful about Congress programme of Muslim mass contact.

The Muslim League contested the election for the first time on an all India basis. On the basis of the election results two facts came to the light. First, the Muslim League was proved so

weak that it could not be regarded as the sole representative body of the Indian Muslims, and second, the Congress now did not have the right to speak for all Indians, especially the Indian Muslims.⁶⁴ In fact, the results showed that the Congress had very little hold on Muslims. It could not even find a sufficient number of Muslims to contest all the reserved seats on its ticket. No Congress Muslim was returned on a Congress ticket from Muslim constituencies in Bengal, Punjab, Assam, United Provinces, Bombay, Central Provinces and Orissa. The Congress success was mainly limited to the Frontier Province though it won a few seats in Madras and Bihar. The inability of a single Congress-Muslim candidate to win election from any Muslim constituency in the United Provinces and the failure of the majority of the Congress Muslims in other provinces, cannot be overlooked. The ballot box had proved that "the belief that the Congress Party is a predominantly Hindu Party to serve the Hindu community is widely held among Muslims."⁶⁵

Thus, on the one hand, the election results of 1937 showed that while the Congress had a greater hold on the non-Muslim electorate, its hold on Muslims was negligible,⁶⁶ and on the other hand, the situation inspired Jinnah to reorganize the Muslim League to pursue the Muslim masses to confide in it.

In this environment of growing political antagonism, it would have been a miracle if the League, which had offered to join the Indian National Congress in forming coalition ministries, had been given a chance to join it. By any means the League did try in the beginning. As has already been mentioned above, in the United Provinces there were some attempts made to negotiate a Congress-League settlement. In these very complicated circumstances, some Muslim League leaders, including Choudhry Khaliquzzaman opened negotiations with the local Congress leaders during March-April 1937, offering their co-operation in the legislature on the basis of the Congress programme as laid down by the Congress Working Committee at its meeting at Wardha on the 28th February 1937. Khaliquzzaman was regarded

⁶⁴ Zaidi in C.H. Philips, ed., n. 5, p. 263.

⁶⁵ *Star of India* (Calcutta), 12 March 1937.

⁶⁶ *Civil and Military Gazette*, 14 April 1937.

as the "torn between his old loyalty to the Congress and his new loyalty to the League". He persisted in continuing his negotiations with the Congress leaders, but these negotiations ultimately failed on the 28th July 1937. Regarding the terms offered by Maulana Azad on behalf of the Congress, there were only two main conditions laid down by the Congress for a coalition with the League, namely, the "Muslim League group in the United Provinces Legislature shall cease to function as a separate group" and that the "Muslim League Parliamentary Board in the United Provinces will be dissolved, and no candidate will thereafter be set up by the said Board at any election".⁶⁷ As regards the first condition, all that is needed to be said is that it was difficult to see how a Congress-League coalition government could have functioned effectively in the United Provinces if the Muslim League group in the local legislature had continued to function as a separate group. As regards the second condition, it is necessary to point out that the Congress had already dissolved its own Parliamentary Board and all that it was asking the League to do was to follow suit, with the sole object of avoiding a confrontation between the Congress and the League in any future by election. It is significant that none of these two conditions was especially objected to by Khaliqzaman in his public statement dated the 30th July 1937. The break-down of the talks between the Khaliqzaman and the Congress leaders in July, 1937, though regretted by a group of people, caused a little surprise. The most significant comment was given by Khaliqzaman himself. "I am afraid", he said, "I was trying to accomplish the impossible."⁶⁸ Khaliqzaman stated that the negotiations failed not because of his insistence on excluding communal matters from the scope of the agreement, but also because of the "unfairness of the conditions" dictated by Azad.⁶⁹

Jinnah vehemently criticized Khaliqzaman for doing flirtation with the Congress. He expressed his utter bitterness with the Congress thus: "Wherever they (Congress) are in majority, and

67 *The Leader* (Allahabad), 4 August 1937.

68 *Ibid.*

69 *Ibid.*

wherever it suited them, they refused to co-operate with the Muslim League parties and demanded unconditional surrender and signing of their pledges."⁷⁰ Jinnah and so many other critics maintained that the Congress intentionally boycotted the Muslim League from the Ministry.

S.R. Mehrotra opines that actually the League had made no such offer and so there was no question of the Congress accepting or rejecting any offer of the League.⁷¹

Consequently, a new chapter in the communal controversy opened with the formation of Congress ministries in the provinces. Congress mass contact movement seemed to move towards its failure and a large number of Muslims under the influence of communal organizations, having kept themselves aloof from the Congress and its struggle, did not have any interest in transfer of power from British to Indian hands in the Congress-governed provinces. Jinnah took opportunity from these situations and exploited the things to the full. He once appealed to the Muslims of India to unite and proclaimed that he did not wish to quarrel with Hindus but with Congress High Command. Moreover, Fazl-ul-Haq, the Bengal Premier also drew public attention towards Muslim grievances against the Congress rule. He raised the question of Muslims' future in self-governing India and appealed to the Muslim masses to join and strengthen the Muslim League.

Some letters of Jawaharlal and Fazl-ul-Haq are of vital interest to show evidences of the conflict, confusion and misunderstanding prevailing at that time. The more they tried to clear their stand, the more they were confused. Here one can judge, while going through some of these letters as to where these leaders were misled. Before declaring his charges against the Congress Ministry, Fazl-ul-Haq wrote to Nehru stating that he wanted to make an enquiry about the justification of the Congress deeds. This letter correspondence, though having been slightly separated from the main text, has been reproduced.

⁷⁰ Mehrotra, n. 5, p. 258.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

below to present a realistic objective of the present study.⁷²

.....

Letter Correspondence between Fazl-ul-Haq and
Jawaharlal Nehru

Park Circus,
Calcutta.

The 16th November, 1939

Dear Mr. Jawaharlal,

Thank you very much for your letter of November 13, from Allahabad.

Since I wrote to you last, I have been in communication with my friends both Hindu and Muslim in the various provinces in order to collect materials for making out an effective tour programme. My idea is to collect reports as much as possible and then select a few typical cases. It is not from a spirit of vindictiveness or from any feeling of spite against the Congress Ministries that I am insisting on this investigation. I am very definitely of opinion that there cannot be any lasting peace in the country unless the two major communities learn to trust each other and this they will not learn unless all causes of suspicion lurking in the minds of one against the other have been removed. If on investigation it is found that the charges were groundless and unfounded, it would be due to the Congress Ministries or the Mussalmans to say publicly that the Congress Ministries were not to blame. If on the other hand, the charges are well founded we should take precautions that these things may not happen in the future. At the present moment the position is that the Muslims make the charges and the Congress Ministries deny them. There is no adjudication of the points at issue and different people hold different views as to whether the charges are true or not. All this has got to be removed and

⁷² *Jawaharlal Nehru Papers*, p. 1, Vol. 20, Teenmurti Library, New Delhi, 1957.

the question of guilt or innocence definitely cleaned and decided. If on the whole we find that the Congress Ministries have made mistakes, it would be a graceful act on their part to make a public acknowledgement. If on the other hand, we find that the main charges have failed, it will not be necessary to bother about the minor incidents and we can at once declare that the Congress Ministries stand absolved of all blame.

Yours Sincerely,
A.K. Fazl-ul-Haq

.....

Nehru's Reply to Fazl-ul-Haq seeking clarification of the charges levelled against the Congress Ministries

Anand Bhawan,
Allahabad.
November 18, 1939.

Dear Mr. Fazlul Haq,

...That certain specific instances should be put down and the charges against the Congress Ministries should be detailed. The Congress Ministries concerned should then be asked to let us have their version of the facts. If necessary the present Government in the Province might be requested to help us in this matter.

Any investigation without this preliminary and essential survey would be entirely pointless as well as unfair to the parties concerned.

In your first statement you mentioned two or three instances in the U.P., namely, Tanda, the Cawnpore firing and the Khaksars in the U.P. These three are definite instances on which presumably you based your charge against the Congress Ministry in the U.P. I suggest that we might take these three and find out what the facts were.

The question before us relates to the behaviour of the Congress Ministries and not to local officials and the like.

This behaviour of the Congress Ministry depends on their general policy as well as the particular orders issued by them to the local officials. All these can only be got from headquarters and not locally. I am personally quite willing to have the local investigation in a particular case where this is necessary. But this can follow other real investigation. It might be helpful also for purposes of comparison to have certain facts about services etc., and the policy that the various governments have pursued in the matter, both in Bengal and Punjab as well as in the other provinces in India.

Yours Sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

.....

Then Fazl-ul-Haq's charges on the Congress Ministry came in detail. He issued his long statement and charges against the Congress to the Press. The statement was published under the title "Muslims' sufferings under Congress Rule". The whole statement is as follows:⁷¹

"For some time I have had in my possession documents containing the most convincing details of the oppressions committed on Muslims in the various provinces hitherto under Congress administration in India. Whenever I happened to allude to these sufferings and other disabilities of Muslims, I was ridiculed and abused in a section of the public press, and instances have not been wanting of responsible leaders of Congress opinion actually charging me with having invented stories deliberately for the purpose of discrediting the Congress and the Congress administration.

Responsible leaders of the Congress and the Congress Press still continue to laugh to scorn all these allegations of Muslim sufferings under Congress rule. I have hitherto refrained from publishing these accounts in the press as I felt that such publication would tend to embitter the already unhappy relations between the two major communities of India. But the more I

71 *Amul Datar Patrika* (Calcutta), 12 December, 1939.

refrain from placing my cards on the table, the more insistent and persistent become the allegations that our charges are false and cannot therefore with hold these facts any longer from the public. It is with the deepest regret that I have to do so, but the public will surely appreciate that I have no other alternative.

Never before in India's history have riots taken a heavier toll of life and property within such a short space of time than during the two and a half years of Congress administration in some of the provinces of India. In almost all of these riots and outbreaks Muslims have admittedly become the principal sufferers.

I shall presently narrate some cases of oppression on Muslim minorities in the provinces of Bihar, the United Provinces and Central Provinces and Bihar. I may here refer to the story of boycott, loot, arson, assault, murder and mass terrorisation of which our helpless correligious, condemned to live in predominantly Hindu areas under Congress Governments, were the pitiable victims.

...As soon as Congress Ministries came into office they did some very unusual things. They issued instructions written or verbal asking local authorities to take into their counsels in all important matters the local Congress executives. They issued orders for the hoisting of the Congress flag on public buildings ...schools ..They ordered or permitted the singing of the Congress song on all conceivable and inconceivable occasions, disregarding the protests of Muslims and even ridiculing Muslims for so protesting. They introduced and encouraged Hindi and in Madras they made it a compulsory subject for all students to learn, thus showing their bias for the Sanskrit culture

Thus was the stage set for the blatant arrogance of the militant Hindu to burst the bounds of restraint which non-partisan government had hitherto imposed.

And what was their will?...It is briefly stated: "Mother cow" must be protected ..Muslims must not be allowed to eat beef. Hence the brutal inhumanities of Tilokari and the innumerable other outrages and persecutions the truth of which none dare deny. The religion of Muslims must be humbled because was not this the land of Hindus?

...In pursuing the instances which I shall now cite, I would ask the reader to note that the Congress Ministries seem to have-

perfected a new technique in administering law and order when Muslims happened to be the victims of oppression. That technique consisted among other things."

.....

The following charges were categorically declared by Fazl-ul-Haq against the Congress Ministries in the Central Provinces and Bihar⁷⁴.

(1) The leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha and their agents were given free rein to carry on the most virulent anti-Muslim propaganda while a very large number of leaders and workers of the Muslim League were bound down of the penal code. The communal Hindu papers were not in any way checked although some of them published in Marathi were extremely provocative in their writings but action was taken against almost all the Muslim newspapers for much less provocative writings.

(2) Strong objections were taken by the Muslims of Akola, Nagpur, Khamgoan, Malkapur and Khandwa against the violent speeches of certain Arya Samaj workers but the Government took no action. Only one Arya Samajist was prosecuted under Section 153 I.P.C. but Government soon withdrew the prosecution. The man went on hunger strike and Hindus indulged in violent demonstrations and hartals which evidently curved the Government down. For lesser offences prominent Muslims were prosecuted and punished.

(3) In many places huge Hindu processions were allowed often against custom, to pass in front of mosques and on several occasions mosques were defiled and their properties destroyed.

(4) There have been several instances when Hindu women who had become Muslims of their own choice and taken Muslim husbands were forcibly removed with impunity by armed gangs of Hindu Mahasabha hooligans. Report to the police produced no result. Nagpur became notorious for this.

(5) A gang of armed Hindus forcibly entered the house of a Muslim in Khamgoan on the pretext that a Hindu woman had been converted to Islam. The allegation was false but the Muslim was severely beaten. In village Bakheda of the same Taluq a Hindu gang led by well-known Hindu leaders made a similar assault on several Muslim houses on a similar pretext and assaulted the inmates and destroyed their property. No action was taken.

(6) At Luner in Buldana District Berar, Muslims were forcibly prevented from using sweet water from its only source of supply which was the gift of old Muslim kings.

(7) The murderers of Muslims in Nagpur riots of 1935 who were undergoing long terms of imprisonment were released immediately after the Congress Ministry came into office.

(8) The cases against the accused arising out of the Jabbalpore riots of 1938 in which both Hindus and Muslims were involved were withdrawn because the accused happened to be Hindus. In the Jabbalpore riots 4 Muslims had been killed and therefore there was every likelihood of the Hindus being more severely punished than the Muslims. Hence the withdrawals in Jabbalpore.

(9) An impartial investigation will show that most of the riots in this province took place during the Holi festival and that Muslims were the greatest sufferers. Yet the number of Muslims who were prosecuted far exceeded the number of Hindus.

(10) An innocent Muslim boy was murdered at Katna. Some influential Hindus were arrested. Then followed Hindu protest meetings and demonstrations with the result that the arrested persons were released.

(11) At Katangi a Muslim youth died on unfettered propaganda through the press and the platform for the complete boycott of the Muslims. Muslim trade and business was thus hit hard, Hindus were openly asked not to make purchases from Muslims, not to pay their dues to Muslims and Muslim shops were picketed in many places. Muslim fakirs living in villages were turned out, Muslim "Idgahs" were desecrated.

(12) Muslim contractors were taken to task by responsible officers of local bodies for employing Muslim labourers.

(13) Muslim "Tongawalas" and taxi drivers were boycotted and Muslim employees of factories and in private services were gradually dispensed with.

(14) During Hindu processions offensive slogans became customary such as "Hindustan Hindu ka hai na kisi ke Bapka", "Nizam Murdabad—Mussalman Besharam, Islam Murdabad" etc. The police took no notice of these.

(15) At Malkapur a procession was tried to be taken with music past a mosque at prayer time. A "Tazia" was burnt during Muharram, several Muslims who tried to establish peace were themselves attacked with "lathi".

(16) At Martazpur, Arya Samajists had anti-Hyderabad meeting simultaneously with meeting of Muslims to celebrate the prophet's birth-day. Stones were thrown at the Muslim meeting, but only Muslims were prosecuted.

(17) While Mr. Sharif was turned out of the Ministry for reprising a Muslim suffering imprisonment for an offence against a Hindu girl, the Congress Ministry remitted the death sentence of a Hindu "Panwala" of Hoshangabad who had been convicted of a graver offence. In this case the victim happened to be a Muslim woman and the culprit was a Hindu. The mentality of the Ministry is abundantly proved by this one case alone.

(18) There are many cases when authorities of local bodies used coercion on Muslim employees in order to get them enrolled as Congress members.

(19) In many places taxes and fees were imposed for the sale-purchase or slaughter of cattle. Khamgoan, Akola, Buldana, Arcot, Chikla, Karanja, Ghasanji and Wun are some of the municipalities which imposed exorbitant fees on cow slaughter and framed by-laws putting restrictions on the sale of cattle.

(20) At Khamgoan, the Municipal Committee refused grant to the Muslim high school which had always been in receipt of a grant.

(21) The birth days of B.G. Tilak and Mr. Gandhi were declared as holidays. The title "Mahatma" was officially recognized and Muslims were also required to use it.

(22) Several local boards issued written orders to Urdu schools asking them to celebrate the Gandhi Jayanti and to

worship the image of Mr. Gandhi.

(23) The Hinganhat Municipality imposed a heavy licence fee on the aerated water business which was mostly in Muslim hands. The Itarsi Municipality prohibited cattle slaughter within the municipal limit even during Bakr-Id.

(24) In the 83 local boards of the province out of 15,000 elected members not even half a dozen are elected Muslim members and there are only about a dozen Muslim employees.

(25) Ministers and Government officials openly told the people not to take part in Muslim League activities as otherwise they could expect no help from the Government.

(26) The Khamgaon Municipal Committee refused grant to secondary Urdu schools. Muslim boys were required either to sing "Bande Matram" or to bow like Hindus while the song was sung.

(27) The Muslim subordinates were persecuted by many Hindu superior officers. This was specially noticeable after the Jabbalpore, Saugar and Damot communal riots.

(28) At Khamgaon there was a written agreement between Hindus and Muslims according to which no procession with music would pass before the Jabbalpore mosque. During Ramzan Mr. Savarkar's procession was allowed past this mosque in violation of the written pact. When approached, the Government kept silent.

(29) There have been several cases of persecution of butchers whose cattle were forcibly taken away and neither the culprits were prosecuted nor the victims compensated.

(30) Many cases of mates and patwaris harrassing Muslim agriculturists.

(31) Teachers in schools having Muslim League sympathies were victimized.

(32) A Muslim City Superintendent of Police and a Muslim Deputy Superintendent of Police were harrassed because they followed up the complaint of the Muslim girl against a very high-placed person whom the girl identified as the man who had committed an outrage upon her. The case was hushed up and the girl subsequently married to the motor driver of the high placed person in question.

(33) Another Muslim district Superintendent of Police who

had prosecuted the brother of a Congress M.L.A. for defalcation of Municipal funds was similarly persecuted.

(34) All Muslim Honorary Magistrates with Muslim League affiliations or sympathies were removed from office.

(35) The Ministry ordered the acquirement of land attached to the kotwali Mosque, Jabhalpore.

(36) At Mahker the Municipal Committee under orders of the Congress Committee included Muslim milk sellers as "Hindus" in the electoral roll.

(37) The Congress Government spent thousands to help Hindu weavers but no help was given to Muslim weavers.

(38) Hindus were allowed freely to make organised efforts in cattle markets to prevent sale of cattle to butchers.

(39) The Anjuman Islamia Press of Jabhalpore used to receive previously government printing orders and out of its profits maintained the only Urdu High School here. The Congress Government stopped giving printing orders to that press reducing the Urdu High School to great difficulties.

(40) Although the population of Muslims in Jabhalpore is about 25 per cent, there has been a progressive reduction of Muslim employees in the district office.

(41) At Saugar the President of the Municipal Committee ordered the Muslim students of the Municipal High School either to sing "Bande Matram" or leave the School.

(42) In some places, for instance, in Mandla, cow sacrifice was totally prohibited.

That is the end, for the present, of my narration of facts as I have obtained them. It may be that in some of the instances which I have cited, action was taken against some of the culprits, information about which has not reached me. That would make no difference to the Muslim case against the Congress. No one can deny that these grave outrages were committed and the helpless Muslims, living surrounded back to life and it is little solace to the victims of outrages, typical instances of which have been cited above, to know that their tormentors and persecutors have been punished. The Muslim case remains that during the Congress regime they were condemned to live in terror and to suffer these atrocities, while

the law moved tardily or did not move at all.⁷⁵

(Jawaharlal Nehru, as President of the Congress sharply responded to the charges and wrote a letter to Fazl-ul-Haq asserting that his charges were throughout baseless and insisted on him to have an early enquiry of the charges. It also appears from his letter that Fazl-ul-Haq was though very hasty to impose the charges on the Congress Ministry, yet he by no means showed any consciousness for the investigation.).⁷⁶

**Jawaharlal Nehru's response to the charges levelled
against the Congress Ministries**

Anand Bhawan,
Allahabad.
December 26, 1939

The Hon'ble Mr. A. Fazlul Haq,
Premier,
Park Circus,
Calcutta.

Dear Mr. Fazlul Haq,

... You thought it fit, in the last week of October to issue a challenge to me and stated that you have got definite evidence that most inconceivable atrocities have been committed on the Muslims and Congress Government would not, and at any rate did not, take any action to protect the Muslims. You gave a challenge to me to fix a convenient time when you would take me to a number of places to prove your charges. This was your proposal and I accepted it willingly and ever since then I have been trying my best to have "this question of alleged excesses committed on Muslims by the Congress Ministries settled once for all", as you yourself put it in your letter of

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Jawaharlal Nehru papers, n. 28.

November 4th. But my efforts have been in vain and have been thwarted. You will agree with me that the fault is not mine. Meanwhile the same charges continue to be made by you as well as other Muslim League leaders and every attempt at an enquiry is rejected or put off. This seems to me to be extraordinarily unfair, but it may be that my standards of measuring public or private conduct are not the same as yours.

The recent proposal about a royal commission, which you seem to have approved, can only mean an avoidance of an enquiry, as there is no such commission anywhere, nor is there any chance of its taking shape.

...You will not be surprised to learn that I have often received complaints of your administration. Some of these complaints have been of a very serious nature. But it is not my habit to form conclusions on one-sided complaints nor do I like interfering in another's work. I took no steps in regard to these complaints therefore, nor did I make any public reference to them.

...I have gone through your list of charges as published in the Press, especially those relating to the U.P. It may interest you to know that some of these very charges have been brought against the Congress Government in the U.P. by the Hindu Mahasabha and their sympathisers, on the ground that they show the partiality of that government for Muslims. These Hindus have complained bitterly that they, the Hindus, have been crushed and unfairly treated as the Government was desirous of pleasing and placating the Muslims.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

(The newspapers gave their valuable opinion on the Haq's charges as well as the Muslims' attitude towards the Congress Ministry. Moreover, some newspapers tried to defend the Congress and asserted that it was not the Congress, but some of the Muslim leaders, who did not want any settlement. On the same day, Haq's charges were published in the editorial column of *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, which asserted some vital points.

in favour of the Congress.)⁷⁷

Editorial comments in *Amrit Bazar Patrika*
dated Monday, December 18, 1939

"The Third Arm"

In the course of a leading article under the caption "Break the Silence" we appealed to the Governor-General and the Governors to reply to the charges that Mr. Jinnah has made not only against the late Congress Ministries but also against themselves We wonder why Mr. Jinnah's charge against the Governors is that they had failed to exercise their power under the constitution for the protection of the Moslem minorities in the Congress provinces. How would the case for a royal commission become unanswerable if the Governors were to publicly declare that they had no cause for the exercise for their power in this respect?

"I can only say", states Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in the course of a statement to the press, "that I am amazed at the conspiracy of silence on the part of the Viceroy and the Governors." And he goes on to observe: "Mr. Jinnah's attack is as much against them (the Governors) as against the Congress. The League has openly charged them with dereliction of duty and defiance of the King's instructions. Apart from failing to help the cause of justice and exposing the Congress Ministries to a false and malicious campaign of abuse and vilification, they are, by remaining silent, owing to narrow ideas of constitutional propriety doing grave injury to themselves and to their professions of impartiality between the Indian communities."

Mr. Jinnah, Sardar Patel rightly observes, is playing the game of the imperialist. And how he and his "thanksgiving" mandate to his community are being exploited will be seen from the columns of some of our Anglo-Indian contemporaries, one of whom says: "Mr. Jinnah's logic is good, but his promises seem to be faulty. For we do not believe that the Governors

⁷⁷ *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, n. 73.

neglected their duty under the Instrument of Instructions or that the Congress Ministries were intentionally guilty of oppressing Moslems.

It will be noticed that so far as Mr. Jinnah's charge against the Governors is concerned it is summarily dismissed by our Anglo-Indian contemporary. But the Congress Ministries are not allowed to escape so easily. It is indeed said in their favour that they did not "intentionally" oppress the Moslems.

...But the suggestion is made that the Ministers unintentionally oppressed. That is on all forces which Mr. Jinnah's logic... is considered good by our contemporary. But does it make the slightest difference if the Congress Ministries unintentionally oppressed the Moslems? Is it not the duty of a Governor to protect the minorities even when the latter are unintentionally oppressed by his ministries.

...In fact there is not a single British friend of Mr. Jinnah from Whitehall to Chowringhee who has expressed approval of the idea of a Royal Commission.

...The game behind this demand for a Royal Commission has thus been described by Sardar Patel: "The meanest intelligence will perceive that this is a pure and simple dilatory tactic. Mr. Jinnah knows full well that a Royal Commission, even if agreed to, will take months to start functioning and will take a very long time in touring over this vast country to reach its findings."

Mr. Jinnah does not desire a communal settlement. This opinion is not confined to Hindus only. Maulana Shahid Hakhri, President of the U.P. branch of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema has arrived at the conclusion that "Mr. Jinnah considers Hindu-Moslem unity as a death warrant to his movement." Nawab Abidi, the Organising Secretary of the All-India Shia Political Conference considers that "the Moslem League does not represent the Muslims and particularly the three crores of Shias of India." The nationalist Muslims of Sind have declared that "Mr. Jinnah's declaration is not the voice of the Muslims of India, and it is not even of all the members of the Muslim League." Whom then does Mr. Jinnah represent?...

Fazl-ul-Haq never tried to realize the reality of Muslims suffering from all sorts of disabilities and oppressions in Congress Provinces, as alleged by him, and when Jawaharlal Nehru challenged him to substantiate his allegations, he offered to give proofs if Nehru would accompany him to the places where these oppressions were practised. Nehru readily agreed, but Haq suddenly became very busy and postponed the demonstration to some future convenient date.⁷⁸

In its early phase Nehru had a lengthy correspondence with Jinnah and Nawab Ismail Khan to find out what exactly the demands and grievances of the Muslim League were from the point of view that the Congress might take into account to meet them and thus pave the way for a communal settlement. The gist of the entire correspondence shows that Jinnah avoided the issue and gave unhelpful replies.⁷⁹ Gandhi initiated personal contact. It was followed by talks between Subhas Chandra Bose, the Congress President, and Jinnah. The Muslim League leader in his later correspondence declared the Muslim League as the sole representative political organisation of the Muslims of India and called the Indian National Congress as a purely Hindu communal organisation. Jinnah alleged that the Congress formed governments of its own complexion in seven provinces of the eleven, that to Muslims this meant submitting to Hindus. Like the other bonafide candidates of the Muslim League, the "Congress Raj" became a "worse bogey" than "British Raj" that had ever been. The League had several meetings in which it condemned the Congress Ministries, saying that "the present ministry has ceased to have the support of any party and is spending merely on its wits...continuance in office of such a ministry...is bound to demoralize the people, and is tantamount to violation of the principles of democratic constitution."⁸⁰

To be more accurate, the Muslim League took the Congress rule as a challenge to their own existence. Reaction was a natural outcome. This reaction against the Congress ministries

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Sadiq Ali, n. 6, p. 16.

⁸⁰ *The Daily Gazette* (Karachi), 19 October 1938.

mainly broke into two ways. Firstly, the Muslim politicians outside the Congress were alarmed about solidity of the Congress organisation. They realized that due to lack of unity and lack of organisation their power was at peril. Therefore, they began to organise the Muslim power at their best. This was proved successful when Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, Faiz-ul-Haq and Sir Muhammad Saidulla, the premiers of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam announced that they were advising their Muslim supporters to join the League. This move enormously enhanced, both the strength of the League and that of Jinnah at its head. The second step was taken by them to mispropagate the Congress principles as by theory and practice. In 1938, Jinnah declared that all hopes for a communal peace had been wrecked on "Congress fascism".⁴¹

The League charged the Congress for using oppression, injustice and ill-treatment to the Muslims. The Congress was accused of a set design to establish Hindu Raj and crush the culture and annihilate their political and economic rights.⁴² To this effect the Council of the All India Muslim League passed a resolution on 20th March which appointed a committee to enquire into the Muslim grievances in Congress provinces. The report published by the committee was popularly known as "Purpur report".⁴³ Some grievances may briefly be mentioned here.

One of their notable grievances was against the "Bande Matram" song as the national anthem. Abdul Hamid opined that this introduced a war cry against the Muslims in a Bengali novel, *Anandamatha*, written by the Bengali novelist, Bankim Chander Chatterji. That is why the Muslims had certain objections of calling it as national anthem. The second criticism was the tri-colour flag. Another attack was made on the Muslim mass contact. Likewise, the Wardha scheme of basic education, Vidya Mandir scheme of education, the Hindi-Urdu controversy, were the main points of allegations. According to the report, Urdu was being suppressed in favour

⁴¹ Hodson, n. 17, p. 73.

⁴² Sadq Ali, n. 6, p. 16.

⁴³ Hodson, n. 17, p. 73.

of Hindi and that the Muslims were denied their fair share of public appointments. Jinnah came out with a demand for a Royal Commission to enquire into the charges, but the Government did not accept this demand and the matter was dropped there. Nevertheless, Sir Harry Haig, the Governor of the United Provinces, testified to the scrupulous case of the Congress Ministries to deal with them fairly and justly.⁸⁴ Even the Congress had much to say in its favour. Rajendra Prasad tried to justify each and every step taken by the Congress.⁸⁵ Sadiq Ali stated that most of the allegations were imaginary, based on vague identifications, one-sided stories, distortions and exaggeration.⁸⁶ Such matters as the *Bande Matram* as a national song, or flying the tri-colour flag on public institutions, were nothing new. The national flag had ever since 1920, been the symbol of national solidarity and opposition to foreign rule, but it had never been felt as opposition to Islam. Even *Bande Matram* had come to be regarded the national song by historical associations since the early years of the present century and had been in vogue since the Bengal partition days. The Muslims community never raised voice against this before. The common language, the Congress advocated, was Hindustani, both Urdu and Hindi found suitable in the Northern India. On the question of Muslim mass contact movement, Rajendra Prasad stated that this activity was quite old but the League's opposition to this was new. Congress had always tried to have good contact with Muslim masses but Muslims as such had never raised any objection until the Congress ministries came into office. Rajendra Prasad says :

It is difficult to understand how it becomes an offence on the part of the Congress if it tries to reach the Muslim masses also, unless it be assumed that the Muslim League alone has the right to speak to a Muslim in India and nobody else. Hindu, Muslim or others can approach them and speak to them about political, economic, or any other

⁸⁴ Rajendra Prasad, n. 15, p. 147.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Sadiq Ali, n. 6.

matter of general interest. In every free country every individual or group has or ought to have the freedom to place before the people his or its own ideals and programme of action....⁸⁷

This point was also found baseless that the Muslims were deprived of their share in public appointments. As a matter of fact, generally preference was given to the Muslims in these cases. On the other hand, the Muslims ignored the fact that the Hindu communalists were anti-Congress because they thought that this organization was pro-Muslim and was sacrificing the legitimate interests of the Hindus. The Congress, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, identified itself with the Khilafat movement. In so doing, it actually stimulated Muslim communalism.

Here is a brief review of the achievements of both the non-Congress Government and the Congress Government, which has been observed by R. Coupland.⁸⁸

The non-Congress governments were formed in Bengal, Punjab and Sind and to some extent they were found in Assam and Orissa also. According to Coupland, though the governments had governed, yet their capacity had been uneven. Some of the ministers in Bengal and Punjab had been the men of good ability, but their colleagues were not so, mainly in Assam and Sind. He further stated that the communal problem stood everywhere as an obstacle to the development of a parliamentary government. In all four provinces, with the brief exception in Assam and with partial exception in Bengal, the Congress remained part of the opposition. The impact of the Muslim League on the working of provincial autonomy has been similar to that of the Congress. He wrote that the League was a wholly communal organisation, more like the Hindu Mahasabha than the Congress itself.⁸⁹ Its purpose was not like the Congress and it wanted to maintain constitutional government in the four provinces provided it was Muslim Government. Its prac-

⁸⁷ Rajendra Prasad, n. 35, p. 41.

⁸⁸ R. Coupland, n. 32, pp. 22-25 ff.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

tical achievement was to secure the allegiance of the Muslim Ministers and Muslim supporters in Punjab. "All the more fiercely in these provinces than elsewhere because the odds are more even, the Congress and the League are striving, the one to impose, the other to reject, the doctrine of the strong unitary centre, reflecting the great Hindu majority of India."⁹⁰ Thus the constitutional issue in non-Congress provinces too had become inseparably interwoven with the communal issue. The final settlement was possible only after the final settlement of this problem.

So far as the Congress governments were concerned, the ministries took office in July, 1937 in seven provinces—Madras, Bombay, Central Provinces, United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa and N.W.F. Provinces. They resigned in October and November 1939.

Though the achievements of the Congress regime were freely acknowledged on the British side, Lord Linlithgow, in his statement of October 17, 1939, stated that the Congress and non-Congress governments "have done so, on the whole with great success...no one can question."⁹¹

However, criticisms cannot be undermined that the communal antagonism was continuing in the Congress provinces and besides all their efforts, the Congress Ministers could not check and prevent riots. Coupland charged that the Congress High Command did not have the room to share power with the Muslim League.⁹² However, he assessed that the idealism of the Congress was not fair. Most of the Congress leaders regarded the victory of their party more important than the welfare of the people.⁹³ According to Coupland "All Congressmen, moreover were affected by the totalitarian character of the Congress system....They felt themselves to be at once the servants of the people and its masters....Progress as well as power was its monopoly."⁹⁴

As time went on, it became clear that the result of the Con-

90 *Ibid.*, p. 85.

91 *Ibid.*, p. 157.

92 *Ibid.*

93 *Ibid.*, p. 156.

94 *Ibid.*

gress leaders' refusal to share their power with the League was not what they had hoped for. Just after the result of the election, the Muslim leaders started accusing the Congress intention. When the League met in conference at Lucknow in October, 1937, Jinnah at once denounced the Congress for pursuing an exclusively Hindu policy which was bound to intensify communal antagonism. To him, "Moslems can expect neither justice nor fair-play under Congress Government."⁹⁵

This view was actively followed by the Muslim Ministers, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, Fazl-ul-Haq and Sir Muhammad Sadullah. Their appeal to Muslims to join the League brought a new life into the League. And thus League became a force to reckon with. Within two or three months, about 170 new branches of the League started functioning. No less than 100,000 new members were reported to have joined the League.

On the contrary the Congress leaders seemed slow to realize the full force of the reaction the Muslim League had provoked. At best what the Congress did, was to pass a resolution which stated —

The Congress approves of and confirms the resolution of the Working Committee on Minority Rights passed in Calcutta in October, 1937, and declares afresh that it regards it as its primary duty and fundamental policy to protect the religious, linguistic, cultural and other rights of the minorities in India.⁹⁶

However, the new strength of the League was noticed by the Congress and a fresh effort for the rapprochement was continued. Correspondence between Jinnah and Nehru, Jinnah and Subhas Chandra Bose, Jinnah and Rajendra Prasad continued, but with no result. The Congress by not accepting Jinnah's claim to regard the League as the only organisation for Muslims, started realizing that Jinnah had stood as the supreme leader of the Muslims. The differences with the League destroyed the chance of the Congress to convince the Muslim masses that

⁹⁵ *Muz.* n. 4, 1937, Vol. 2, p. 143.

⁹⁶ *IND.*, p. 183.

their rights and interests were safe in Congress' hands.

Besides all its efforts of doing well, Hodson says, "In the light of its consequences, the Congress policy, though politically understandable, was a blunder of the first order."⁹⁷ It heightened Muslim fears. According to them, the Congress was trying to impose "one country, one party, one leader" theory on the people. British Governors of Congress Provinces at that time generally formed the opinion that while their ministers, for the most part, genuinely tried to be communally non-partisan, the sense of power among Congressmen in the districts and villages often led them into arrogant and provocative behaviour.⁹⁸ They feared that the Congress was indirectly following the dictatorship from Europe. The Congress Ministries resigned from office in the last month of 1939 as the War broke out in Europe. It was expected that with the resignation of Congress ministries, the communal tension would decrease and favourable atmosphere would be created to settle all internal differences.

But it never happened. Despite the genuine efforts of leading Congressmen like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and Rajendra Prasad among the Hindus and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan among the Muslims, the rift between the two communities widened.⁹⁹

The explanation for this development probably lies in the fact that both the Congress and the Muslim League were aggressive in their outlook. They did not believe in the philosophy of live-and-let-live and in the virtues of tolerance and compromise.

⁹⁷ Hudson, n. 17, p. 67.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Records, Confidential, File No. 37/34/39, Pol., National Archives, New Delhi.

The Muslim Politics

The Partition of Bengal gave a new impetus to the Muslim politics who regarded the newly created province with a majority of Muslim population as a strong centre of their political activities. As a result, a political consciousness prevailed among the Muslims throughout India. Before this, the common Muslim masses were never actively conscious on political phenomenon. It was due to late Syed Ahmed who directed the Muslims to be aloof from the politics. After the death of Syed Ahmed Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, the other leader, also followed the principle of Syed Ahmed and opposed the Muslims even to form a Muslim organization at Aligarh.¹ But now the Muslims had got an impression by the Partition of Bengal that the British Government had become sympathetic towards the Muslims and according to them the partition was a vital precedence.

The new political consciousness of the Muslims soon found a favourable opportunity for active political work. In 1906, Morley announced in the House of Commons that the Viceroy, Lord Minto, was about to appoint a small committee to consider the question of extending the representative element in the Legislative Council. This opened before the Muslims the possibility of negotiating, in advance, with the Government in

¹ Ram Gopal, *Indian Muslims : A Political History* (Bombay, 1959) p. 24.

order to safeguard their rights and interests in the new Legislation. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk made arrangements to wait upon the Viceroy in a deputation at Simla.² It has also been pointed out how the deputation was really engineered by the British as a deliberate step to drive in a wedge between the Hindus and Muslims, and Minto regarded this move as a "possible counterpoise" to the Congress which he regarded as disloyal and dangerous.³ It is also notable in that context that the then Principal of the Aligarh College guided Muslim politics in a channel which was also injurious to the interests of the Hindus. Due to his favour the old conception of the Muslim leaders like Syed Ahmed and his European friends that the Muslims should not participate into politics, changed. The Aligarh politics was also affected accordingly. Thus the old conception was fading out and new conception was taking place. First, by the Partition of Bengal, second by the announcement of the Governor-General of the constitutional reforms, and third by the so-called Bengali leaders' activities in the Indian National Congress, the communal sensation arose among the Muslims. The anti-Partition agitation among the Hindus was going high and the Congress was taking favour. It brought an idea to the Muslims that in order to counteract the political organisations, mainly the Indian National Congress, they must have a central organisation of their own. In 1906 on the occasion of a Muslim educational conference held at Dacca, Nawab Salimullah got opportunity to express his idea among the rarely gathered eminent leaders and proposed for the foundation of Muslim League. Accordingly, the scheme was accepted and in the same year on December 30, 1906, the All India Muslim League took birth. In brief, the aims and objects of the League were laid down as follows:

- (a) To promote, amongst the Muslims of India, feelings of loyalty to the British Government and to remove any misconception that may arise as to the intentions of government with regard to Indian measures.

² R.C. Majumdar, ed., *Struggle For Freedom* (Bombay, 1969), p. 147.

³ *Ibid.*

- (b) To protect and advance the political rights of the Muslims of India and respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to the government.
- (c) To prevent the rise among the Muslims of India of any feeling of hostility towards other communities without prejudice to the other aforesaid objects of the League.⁴

The Secretary of the League further declared:

We are not opposed to the social unity of the Hindus and the Musalmans. . . But the other type of unity (political) involves the working out of common political purposes. This sort of our unity with the Congress cannot be possible because we and the Congressmen do not have common political objectives. They indulge in acts calculated to weaken the British government. They want representative Government which means death for Musalmans. They desire competitive examinations for employment in Government services and this would mean the deprivation of Musalmans of Government jobs. Therefore, we need not to go near political unity (with the Hindus). It is the aim of the League to present Muslim demands through respectful request, before the Government. They should not, like Congressmen, cry for boycott, deliver exciting speeches and write impertinent articles in newspapers and hold meetings to turn public feeling and attitude against their benign Government.⁵

Further, the political principles of the Muslim League were explained in a speech delivered by Nawab Waqar-ul-Mulk. He proclaimed

God forbid, if the British rule disappears from India, Hindus will lord over it; and we will be in constant danger of our life, property and honour. The only way for the Muslims to escape this danger is to help, in the continuance of the

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁵ *Aligarh Institute Gazette* (Aligarh), 14 August 1907.

British rule. If the Muslims are heartily with the British, then, that rule is bound to endure. Let the Muslims consider themselves as a British army ready to shed their blood and sacrifice their lives for the British Crown.⁶

Referring to the Congress, he said:

We are not to emulate the agitational politics of the Congress. If we have any demands to make, they must be submitted to Government with due respect. But remember that it is national duty to be loyal to the British rule. Wherever you are, whether in football field or in the tennis lawn, you have to consider yourselves as soldiers of a British regiment. You have to defend the British Empire, and to give the enemy a fight in doing so. If you bear it in mind and act accordingly, you will have done that and your name will be written in letters of gold in the British Indian History. The future generations will be grateful to you.⁷

Thus the very birth of the Muslim League shows that the Muslim League started with the utter loyalty to the British Government and hostility towards the Congress. Moreover, the clear difference between the Hindus and Muslims also comes to the light from this very time. Even Muhammad Ali, who was later on regarded as the greatest nationalist leader among the Muslims, admitted in a public speech in 1908 that the interests of the Muslims differed from those of the Hindus and would suffer if they joined the Hindus in their political agitation. He asserted that the Muslims could not be expected to become martyrs to the unity of India and it would be a retrograde step in the political evolution of the Muslims to leave them "at a mercy of an angelic majority".⁸

The agitation over the Partition of Bengal demonstrated the wide cleavage between the Hindus and the Muslims. In the meantime the questions of weightage and separate electorate

⁶ R C. Majumdar, n. 2, p. 151.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

were also raised by the Muslims. The Muslim leaders tried to convince Lord Minto stressing on the essential differences between Hindus and Muslims. They distinguished the Muslims in social customs, religion, historical tradition from those of the Hindus. Besides, they expressed their fear that no Hindu will vote for a Muslim candidate. The Muslim deputation to Minto stressed on the part which was played by the Muslims in defending the country with their military service.

Consequently, the Act of 1909 gave the rights of separate electorates and other rights which were virtually promised by Lord Minto. Henceforth since that period the sense of two nation theory became more clear and Muslims after a long time returned back to the active politics, not as Indian nationalists but as communalists. M. Earnest Piron, a French scholar, comments:

Who had foreseen that Indian nationalism would give birth to a Musalman nationalism, first sulky, then hostile and aggressive? ...At any rate the most dangerous enemies of Indian politics are the Musalmans...⁹

Again he says:

The Indians when they became very troublesome are shown the sword of the Musalman hanging over their heads. The menace even is not necessary. When the Indians, strong in the opinion of the nation, demand simultaneous examinations in London and in India, it is so easy to tell them with lips: 'First begin by coming to an understanding amongst yourselves and by converting the Musalman.'¹⁰

It has clearly been explained in the first chapter that as situation took a turn, after 1910 one group of Muslims felt a need to come nearer to the Congress. The Balkan crisis and Khulafat Movement forced the Muslims to lose faith in the British and to unite with Congress. The Lucknow Pact of 1916 was the

⁹ *Idem*, p. 153.

¹⁰ *Idem*.

fruitful consequence of it. Gandhi, who was already eager to befriend the Muslims, raised his voice for the cause of Muslims and Khilafat. But ultimately when the Khilafat Movement failed and Gandhi was accused of "the Khilafat wrong", soon the Muslim leaders withdrew from the alliance with Congress. Thus as soon the Hindu-Muslim fraternity finished as it was started. In 1920 the Non-cooperation Movement was suspended by Gandhi and in the same year a number of communal riots occurred. Muhammad Ali, who was the Principal Lieutenant of Gandhi in his Satyagraha campaign, refused to join him in the second campaign in 1930. In the meeting of the All India Muslim Conference in the year 1930, he stated:

We refuse to join Mr. (no longer Mahatma) Gandhi, because his movement is not a movement for the complete independence of India but for making the seventy millions of Indian Musalmans dependants of the Hindu Mahasabha.¹¹

He further told in the Round Table Conference:

Islam was not confined to India. I belong to two circles of equal size but which are not concentric. One is India and the other is the Muslim world...We are not nationalists but supernationalists.¹²

By that time the leadership of Ali Brothers was superseded by Muhammad Ali Jinnah who all of a sudden stood as the engine of the Muslim leadership. The Nehru Report in 1928 was regarded by the Muslims as harmful for the community, Jinnah got only way to win over the confidence of Muslims, to pass resolution against the report in the meeting of the All India Muslim League. Here it should be noted that even before the declaration of the Nehru Report the All India Muslim League in its nineteenth session at Calcutta in December, 1927 passed a resolution stating the separate entity of the Muslim community. It

¹¹ R. Coupland, *Report on the Constitutional Problem in India* (London, 1942-3), p. 111.

¹² *Ibid.*

stated:

The All India Muslim League authorises the Council of the League to appoint a Sub-committee to confer with the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress, and such other organizations as the Council may think proper, for the purpose of drafting a Constitution for India, in which the interests of the Muslim community will be safeguarded, having regard to the following proposals, which the League approves of and adopts, and subsequently to take part in the National Convention which is going to take place in Delhi in March next, as suggested by the Indian National Congress:

1. That Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency and constituted into a separate autonomous province;
2. That reforms should be introduced in the North West Frontier Province and in Baluchistan, placing them on the same footing as the other provinces;
3. That in the present circumstances the representation of Musalmans in the different legislatures of the country through separate electorates is inevitable, and that the Muslims will not accept any scheme involving a surrender of this valuable right, unless and until Sind is actually constituted a separate autonomous province and reforms, as aforesaid, are actually introduced in the North-West Frontier and Baluchistan Provinces. When these requirements are fully satisfied, the Muslims will be prepared to abandon separate electorates in favour of joint electorates with reservation of seats, fixed on the basis of the population of different communities, subject to what is stated hereinafter:
 - (i) in Sind, the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan, the Muslim majority shall make the same concessions with regard to the proportion of seats reserved to the Hindu minority that the Hindu majority in other provinces would make to Muslim minorities over and above the proportion

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11 R. Coupland, *Report on the Constitutional Problem in India* (London, 1942-3), p. 111.

12 *Ibid.*

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 - (i) in Sind, the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan, the Muslim majority shall make the same concessions with regard to the proportion of seats reserved to the Hindu minority that the Hindu majority in other provinces would make to Muslim minorities over and above the proportion

of the provinces, which shall be the minimum basis.

- (ii) in the Central Legislature, Muslim representation shall not be less than one-third.

The League further resolves (a) that in the future constitution of India liberty of conscience shall be guaranteed and no Legislature, Central or Provincial shall have power to make any laws interfering with the liberty of conscience; (b) that no Bill, resolution, motion or amendment regarding inter-communal matters shall be moved, discussed or passed in any Legislature, Central or Provincial, if a three-fourths majority of the members of the community affected thereby in that legislature oppose the introduction, discussion or passing of such Bill, resolution, motion or amendment (inter-communal matters mean matters agreed upon as such by the joint standing committee of both communities of the Hindu and Muslim members of the Legislatures concerned, appointed at the commencement of every session of that Legislature).¹³

It is clear that the Muslims were conscious for their separate electorate from the very beginning of the formation of the Muslim League. Jinnah then organised an All-parties Muslim Conference to give the reply to the Nehru Report. In the conference the Nehru Constitution was repudiated and Jinnah laid down the famous "Fourteen Points" which are explained in the Second Chapter. In brief, the "Fourteen Points" raised Jinnah to a height of a leader. Also the lapse of Nehru Report caused a great triumph and opportunity for Jinnah.

From now onwards the Muslim League began rising. The nationalist Muslim Party which was formed by Ansari in 1928 weakened. Though at the time Muslims were divided into several parties, the Muslim leaders seemed to be equally conscious for their communal rights. The Simon Commission offered the following criticism to Jinnah's Fourteen Points:

¹³ Sharifuddin Pirzada, ed., *Foundation of Pakistan* (Karachi, 1970), pp. 120-1.

This claim goes to the length of seeking to preserve full security for representation now provided for Moslems in these six provinces and to enlarge in Bengal and Punjab the present proportion of seats secured to the community by separate electorates to figure proportionate to their ratio of population. This would give Mahommedans a fixed and unalterable majority of the general constituency seats in both the provinces. We cannot go so far...It would be unfair that Mahommedans should retain the very considerable weightage they enjoy in six provinces and that there should at the same time be imposed, in the face of Hindu and Sikh opposition a definite Moslem majority in Punjab and Bengal unalterable by any appeal to the electorate.¹⁴

The First Round Table Conference was attended by all other prominent Muslim leaders, and they declared in clear and unambiguous language, that no constitution, by whomsoever devised, would be accepted by the Muslims unless their interests were adequately safeguarded in the Constitution. Of course, the Muslim leaders alone would decide whether the proposed safeguards were adequate or not. This position was tacitly accepted by the Conference, by passing a resolution which admitted the Muslim claims of "adequate safeguards" to be incorporated in a future Constitution of India.¹⁵

Iqbal's Presidential address in the Allahabad Session of the Muslim League in December, 1930, reflects the then Muslims' attitude towards the communal problem. It also can be regarded as one of the foundations of the background of Pakistan. Defining the term nationality, Iqbal observed:

Experience, however, shows that the various caste-units and religious units in India have shown no inclination to sink their respective individualities in a larger whole. Each group is intensely jealous of its collective existence....¹⁶

14 *Report of the Statutory Commission* (London, 1927), vol. II, p. 71.

15 *Indian Round Table Conference, 12 November 1930 to 19 January 1931* (London, 1931), p. 72.

16 Shafiq-ud-Din Pirzada, n. 13, pp. 163 ff.

Moreover, Iqbal justified the "Muslim demand for the creation of a Muslim India within India". He told: "I would like to see Punjab, North West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state."¹⁷

The resolutions which were passed at the Delhi Session of the All India Muslim League in 1933 are more relevant to the topic. The twenty-third Session in its second meeting resolved¹⁸ that—

- I. Whereas owing to the failure of the two majority communities inhabiting India, viz. the Hindus and the Muslims to come to an agreement, His Majesty's Government was forced to give a decision relating to some matters between the parties and though the decision falls far short of the Muslim demands, the Muslims have accepted it in the best interests of the country, reserving to themselves the right to press for the acceptance of all their demands, this meeting of the All India Muslim League condemns the activities of those rights which have already been conceded to them....
- II. This meeting of the All India Muslim League advises the Musalmans of India not to be in any way affected by the militant resolutions of the Hindu Mahasabha or the utterances of the communalist Hindu leaders.
- III. It is essential that the Muslim demands which yet remain to be met in respect of the following matters be provided for in the new constitution:
 - (1) Allotment of the Muslim seats, as one-third of either of the two houses in the Central Legislature.
 - (2) Provision for adequate representation of the Muslims from special constituencies.
 - (3) Election to the Federal Upper Houses by the direct method and separate electorates.
 - (4) Declaration of fundamental rights relating to Muslim Personal laws; establishment of qazi's courts in matters involving Muslim rites and

¹⁷ Majumdar, n. 2, p. 536.

¹⁸ Sharifuddin Pirzada, n. 13, pp. 225-7.

usages.¹⁹

Moreover, the resolution of Muslim League on Communal Award declared the acceptance of it as follows:

The League should accept the Communal Award so far as it went until a substitute was agreed upon by the various communities, and on that basis, express its readiness for co-operation with other communities and parties to secure such a future constitution for India as would be acceptable to the country.²⁰

R.C. Majumdar opines that "the foundation of Pakistan was thus well and truly laid long before the leaders, either Muslim or Hindu, ever dreamt of it."²¹ To prove his version authentic, he cites, for an example, the statement of Lala Lajpat Rai made in as early as 1925 where in he suggested "the creation of Moslem provinces in the north-east and north-west of India...to set at rest the ceaseless Hindu-Muslim bickerings and jealousies in some provinces".²²

Moreover, Muslims had made it clear more than once that besides the questions of religion, culture, language and personal laws, there was another question of life and death for them and that their future destiny and fate were dependent upon their securing definitely their political rights, their due share in the national life, the Government and the administration of the country.²³

From the above points of view, the Muslim leaders became conscious about or during the forties of the twentieth century. This communal feeling found its full voice in Muslim League which was taking a new shape under the leadership of M.A. Jinnah. Jinnah was very much dissatisfied with the Muslim League organisation which consisted mostly of big landlords,

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

²¹ Majumdar, n. 2, p. 537.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 538.

²³ N.N. Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register*, 1938 (Calcutta, 1938), Vol. 1, p. 314.

title-holders and rich selfish people who looked more interested in saving their personal interests than the communal or national interests.²⁴ Therefore, he declared:

I would like to see the Muslim League Organisation purified and revived, and with that end in view I am going to hold a Muslim League session on 10 May 1936 at Bombay where I would ask the Muslim League to give me a mandate to form a Parliamentary Board for the forthcoming election purposes. And I promise to you that in that Board I shall give people of your party a majority. If we have to fight elections on the Muslim ticket, it would not be in the interests of either of us to split out votes. Let us therefore fight from the common platform of the Muslim League Parliamentary Board.²⁵

Khaliquzzaman, the prominent Muslim leader, describes the condition of Muslim League during 1936 that Muslims outside were hopelessly divided between themselves and there appeared to be no chance of a joint effort to present a united front, in the Central or the Provincial legislatures through a well-knit party.²⁶ Khaliquzzaman writes:

I believe it was this great drawback which induced Mr. Jinnah to start negotiations with Maulana Ahmad Said, who was Secretary to the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind and had great influence on his colleagues in the Unity Board to consider the advisability of fighting the 1937 elections from a common Muslim platform. But it could only be done if the Muslim Unity Board could be brought round to compromise with the Muslim League, because for the first time the Board had fought and won one-third of the Muslim seats in the Central Assembly in the 1934 elections.²⁷

Of the Unity Board representatives who negotiated the settle-

²⁴ Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore, 1961), p. 141.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

ment with Jinnah, four of them, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Mufti Kifayatullah, Maulana Husain Ahmad and also Maulana Ahmad Saïd died.²⁸ Khaliquzzaman writes: "I happen to be the only person alive to narrate to our progeny both in India and Pakistan the story of how through unity we put life into our old organisation, the Muslim League."²⁹

Thus prior to the elections of 1937, Muslim politics was chaotic, in a state of desperate disorganisation, with interests in conflict at all levels, provincial, local and personal. No Muslim organisation appeared capable of overcoming the differences that decided the Muslim body politic.

In May 1936, Jinnah announced the personnel of the Central Parliamentary Board consisting of fifty-six members—Bengal 8, Panjab 11, Sind 4, North West Frontier Province 4, Madras 4, United Provinces 9, Bihar 5, Central Provinces 2, Delhi 1, Assam 2 and Bombay 6. It is notable that by the time the other Muslim leaders had already formulated their such programmes on provincial basis, Jinnah had to depend only on those leaders who were still unattached to any provincial parties or on those whom he could persuade to merge their organisations with the Muslim League. Although leaders like Fazl-ul-Haq (Krishak Praja Samiti, Bengal), Syed Abdul Aziz (United Party, Bihar), Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi (Azad Party, Sind), Syed Rauf Shah (Muslim Parliamentary Party, Central Provinces), Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (Majlis-i-Ittihad-i-Millat, Panjab), Nawab of Chattari, Muhammad Yusuf, and Liaquat Ali Khan (National Agriculturist Party, United Provinces) had already organised their respective parties to fight the elections under the auspices of their own organisations, yet they were originally nominated to Jinnah's board.³⁰

Jinnah, viewing all the situation, tried to lift Muslim politics from the provincial and local levels to an all India level. He believed that as long as the Muslims were divided and disorganized,

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Cited in Z.H. Zaidi's article "Aspects of the Development of Muslim League Policy", in C.H. Philips, ed., *Partition of India* (London, 1970), p. 247.

and as long as they continued to follow disparate paths having provincial groups without a sense of national unity and cohesion, there could be no chance of a settlement with the Congress. If "the entire Muslims of India were politically organized and if they remain united", he said to the press, "then they will be forging sanctions behind them in order to play their part in the decisions of all India questions."³¹ He further estimated in his Presidential address of the All India Muslim League:

...Since the elections, I find that hundreds of District Leagues have been established in almost every province. Since April last, the Musalmans of India have rallied round the League more and more; and I feel confident that once they understand and realize the policy and programme of the Muslim League, the entire Musalman population of India will rally round its platform and under its flag. The Muslim League stands for full national democratic self-government for India.³²

Moreover, he prevented the Muslims from merging with the Congress:

I want the Musalmans to ponder over the situation and decide their own fate by having one single, definite, uniform policy which should be loyally followed throughout India. The Congressite Musalmans are making a great mistake when they preach unconditional surrender...The League is not going to allow the Musalmans to be exploited either by the British Government or any other Party or group inside the Legislature or outside...The Congress' attempt, under the guise of establishing mass contact with the Musalmans, is an effort to detach them from their accredited leaders.³³

However, Zaidi in his article on Muslim League³⁴ maintains

31 *Star of India* (Calcutta), 17 November 1936.

32 Sharifuddin Pirzada, n. 13, pp. 266-7.

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 269-70.

34 Zaidi, n. 30, p. 250.

that Jinnah throughout 1936 and in the beginning of 1937 continued to speak for Hindu-Muslim co-operation. He realized that there had been differences in the past but he believed that those differences were not incapable of solution for he was still looking at the Indian political scene as an idealist.³⁵ While his statements in his Presidential speech of All India Muslim League give a different idea, the Hindu-Muslim unity was, according to him, barely impossible. He said: "No settlement with the majority is possible, as no Hindu leader speaking with any authority shows any concern or genuine desire for it."³⁶

The year 1937 was very important from this point of view also that Jinnah's ideals were confused. On the one hand he could not totally forget the memories of 'nationalist Jinnah' in him, and on the other, he could not totally rely upon his 'Communalist Jinnah'. Consequently during the time he delivered quite confusing statements. At one place he spoke in favour of Hindu-Muslim unity, and just thereafter at the other place, he declared the communal unity as impossible.

But most of all, Jinnah wanted to make the Muslim League a popular organization built not on the support of a few but one organisation which could have a wider platform to appeal for the Muslim masses. Henceforth, the main feature of the Muslim League programme was to maintain the solidarity of the Muslims as an all-India community and to save them from breaking up into provincial parties and groups.

The coming election was important according to Jinnah not essentially between the Congress and the Muslim League (as some of the members of the Muslim League continued to be the members of the Congress) but between the Muslim League and the local Muslim parties.³⁷

The election manifesto asked for the replacement of the present Provincial Constitution and the proposed Central Constitution by democratic full self-government.³⁸

35 *Ibid.*

36 *Pirade*, p. 13, p. 209.

37 *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore), 11 June 1936.

38 *Zamir*, p. 30, p. 252.

Moreover, apart from other programmes, the manifesto stressed upon the need for a new social order with a view to uplifting the social and economic conditions of the poor and backward Muslims. Therefore, the League adopted the following programme:

1. To protect the religious rights of the Mussalmans. In all matters of purely religious character, due weight shall be given to the opinion of Jamiat-ul-Ulema-Hind and the Mujahids.
2. To make every effort to secure the repeal of all repressive laws.
3. To resist all measures which are detrimental to the interest of India, which encroach upon the fundamental liberties of the people and lead to economic exploitation of the country,
4. To reduce heavy cost of administrative machinery, central and provincial, and allocate substantial funds for nation-building departments.
5. To nationalize the Indian army and reduce the military expenditure.
6. To encourage development of industries, including cottage industries.
7. To regulate currency, exchange and prices in the interest of economic development of the country.
8. To stand for the social, educational and economic uplift of the rural population.
9. To sponsor measures for the relief of agricultural indebtedness.
10. To make elementary education free and compulsory.
11. To protect and promote Urdu language and script.
12. To devise measures for the amelioration of the general conditions of Muslims.
13. To take steps to reduce the heavy burden of taxation.
14. To create a healthy public opinion and general political consciousness throughout the country.³⁹

39 Zaidi, n. 30, p. 259.

The election results of 1937 showed that while the Congress had a great hold on the non-Muslim electorate, its hold on Muslims was negligible. The newspapers also expressed their view that the Congress' hold on Muslim voters was very poor.⁴⁰ On the other hand, the League jumped on its strength. Jinnah's efforts of organizing the Muslim masses showed a hopeful result and the Muslim League session held at Lucknow in October, 1937 was itself a striking proof of its rapidly growing strength. Provincial leaders who had fought elections on the tickets of their organizations and had shown reluctance to merge their parties with the Muslim League joined the League. Fazl-ul-Haq's Praja Party came within the fold of the League. Many Muslim leaders from Sind, Frontier, Madras, Assam, and Central Provinces merged their parties with the Muslim League. The Unionist group in Panjab led by Sikandar Hayat Khan joined the League. He wrote to Jinnah:

You will be glad to learn that enrolment of the League members is going apace and we hope to be able to set up district Leagues throughout the province in a short space of time...On the whole, the development at Lucknow which brought about the solidarity of the Muslims throughout India has been welcome by the Muslim masses.⁴¹

Pioneer opined that the Lucknow session gave fresh strength to the League and the unity which Jinnah aspired to have was partly achieved within about a year of his launching the programme.⁴²

An economic, social and educational programme was also evolved to bring the organization into touch with the masses. The Working Committee of the All India Muslim League included certain points into its programme as:

to fix working hours for factory workers and other labourers;

⁴⁰ *Civil and Military Gazette*, 11 June 1936.

⁴¹ *Zamir*, n. 30, p. 259.

⁴² *Pioneer* (Allahabad), 15, 17 October 1937.

to fix minimum wages;
 to improve the housing and hygienic condition of the labourers and make provision for slum clearance;
 to reduce rural and urban debts and abolish usury;
 to abolish forced labour;
 to undertake rural uplift work;
 to encourage cottage industries and small indigenous industries both in rural and urban areas;
 to encourage the use of Swadeshi articles, specially hand-woven cloth;
 to establish an industrial board for the development of industries and the prevention of exploitation by middlemen;
 to devise means for the relief of unemployment;
 to advance compulsory primary education;
 to reorganize secondary and university education, specially scientific and technical;
 to establish rifle clubs and a military college;
 to enforce prohibition;
 to abolish and remove un-Islamic customs and usages from Muslim society;
 to organize a volunteer corps for social service; and devise measures for the attainment of full independence and invite the co-operation of all political bodies working to that end (proposed by Raja Amir Ahmad Khan of Mahmudabad and seconded by Ali Bahadur Habibullah).⁴³

Then, steps were taken to strengthen the League. The working Committee of the League very shrewdly tackled up almost all the socio-economic programmes which the Congress had been dealing with.

However, to popularize the League, the membership fee was reduced to two annas. Jinnah went on calling for unity among Muslims. The other Muslim leaders also by the time had come to a decision to preach the Muslim masses and warned them to beware of the so-called "Congress tricks". One speech of Fazl-ul-Haq is remarkable when he said:

⁴³ Pirzada, n. 13, p. 280. (The twenty-fifth session of the League held at Lucknow in October 1937 resolved that).

Gentlemen, we are passing through times which are extremely critical for the Muslims of India. On one side, we find the Congress with all its might, organization and resources, determined to crush and subdue the Muslims, and on the other side, we find the Hindu Mahasabha, with all its communal bigotry, characteristic intolerance, narrow political outlook, and unholy intentions, devoting its energies to the frustration of Muslim hopes and the suppression of the legitimate rights and liberties of the Muslim community.⁴⁴

He further discloses:

The time has come for us to review what steps the Muslims have taken so far to counteract these sinister forces which aim at the complete enslavement of the Muslim people of India.⁴⁵

Jinnah also claimed to be equal with the Congress:

The Muslim League claims the status of complete equality with the Congress, or any other organisation, and we have our problems to solve. We have under the present conditions, to organise our people, to build up the Muslim masses for a better world and for their immediate uplift, social and economic, and we have to formulate plans of a constructive and ameliorative character, which would give them immediate relief from the poverty and wretchedness from which they are suffering more than any other section of the people in India.⁴⁶

Jinnah and other Muslim leaders very much reacted against the Congress' plan of the contact with Muslim masses. Moreover, they not only criticized the Congress' Ministry but also

⁴⁴ *Parade*, *Ibid.* p. 282.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 284. (The Presidential speech of Jinnah in the special session of Muslim League held at Calcutta in April 1938).

declared it as 'dictatorship' and made number of charges against the Congress' Ministry.⁴⁷

Though there were certain efforts for the reconciliation and mutual understanding between the Congress leaders and the Muslim leaders, no good result came out.

Consequently, the Muslim leaders turned towards their direct demand for a 'separate land'. The Sind Provincial Muslim League Conference held at Karachi in October, 1938 foreshadowed the trend of Muslim thinking and it was resolved that:

The Sind Provincial Muslim League Conference considers it absolutely essential in the interests of an abiding peace of the vast Indian continent and in the interests of unhampered cultural development, the economic and social betterment and political self-determination of the two Nations, known as Hindus and Muslims, that India may be divided into two Federations, viz., the Federation of Muslim States and the Federation of non-Muslim States.⁴⁸

Again it resolves :

This Conference therefore recommends to the All India Muslim League to devise a scheme of constitution under which Muslim majority provinces, Muslim native states and areas inhabited by a majority of Muslims may attain full independence in the form of a federation of their own with admission to any other Muslim state beyond the Indian Frontiers to join the Federation and with such safeguards for non-Muslim minorities in the non-Muslim Federation of India.⁴⁹

Thus, by 1938 the shape of Muslim politics seemed to be quite changed. The Muslim League gained enough confidence to define the Hindus and Muslims as two nations and to claim for

47 The Congress rule and Muslims' charges are described in Chapter IV.

48 Cited in Zaidi, n. 30, p. 261.

49 *Ibid.*

a separate Muslim nation.

While the Congress insisted that a constituent assembly would be the answer to the communal problem, the Muslim League having rejected the federal scheme, resolved that partition was the only practical solution of the problem.⁵⁰

This idea of division spread so fast from the very beginning of 1939 that in March, 1939, Muslim League's Working Committee considered it seriously and appointed a small committee to look into the various constitutional schemes. The committee consisted of—

1. M.A. Jinnah
2. Sikandar Hyat Khan
3. Mohammad Ismail Khan
4. Abdul Aziz Saheb
5. Abdullah Harun
6. Nazimuddin
7. *Abdul Mahin Chaudhary*
8. Aurangzeb Khan, and
9. Liaqat Ali Khan.⁵¹

Thus the Muslim politics gradually turned to the path of Pakistan and succeeded. All these events created background for the famous Lahore resolution of 1940 which is also called as "Pakistan resolution".

Now the question arises as to who was the driving force behind the Muslim organisation? If it was Jinnah then why could the Muslim League not gain full strength prior to the thirties when Jinnah was already a leading figure in the League? Did the Muslim League receive new impetus first as a result of the short-sightedness of the Congress in excluding Muslim League's representatives from the Provincial Congress cabinets in 1937 and later owing to the alleged persecutions that the Muslims suffered during the Congress regimes of 1937-39? Though some thinkers like Khaliquzzaman seem to think that the former was the main factor which helped the League to rally

⁵⁰ *The Times of India* (Bombay), 27 March 1937.

⁵¹ *Pirzada*, n. 13, p. 221.

the Muslims under its banner. At the same time it is also true that the Muslim leaders were enough conscious to avail every opportunity to raise their voice against the Congress and to demand their own claims. Khalid B. Sayeed seems to be more just in his opinion that "those who think that Pakistan was entirely a product of Hindu hostility to Muslims not only exaggerate Hindu responsibility for it, but also forget that Muslims were just as hostile."⁵²

⁵² Khalid B. Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase* (Karachi 1963), p. 179.

The Parting of the Ways—1940

The immediate effect of the Congress advent to power was a sharp increase in communal hatred and Hindu-Muslim antagonism. The *Statesman* remarked: "Every lover of India must feel disturbed at the fierce communal controversy which has broken out since the advent of provincial autonomy."¹ Jawaharlal Nehru in despair was compelled to write on the 16th December, 1939:

Unfortunately we never seem to reach even the proper discussion of these problems as various hurdles and obstructions in the shape of conditions precedent come in our way....As these hurdles continue and others are added to them I am compelled to think that the real difficulty is the difference in the political outlook and objectives.²

On the other hand, Jinnah after the election and formation of the Provincial Ministry in 1938 reacted in other way: "Wherever they (Congress) are in majority, and whenever it suited them, they refused to cooperate with the Muslim League politics and demanded unconditional surrender and signing of their

1 K.K. Aziz, *Britain and Muslim India* (London, 1963), p. 137.

2 Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided* (Bombay, 1947), p. 155.

pledges.”³

It seems Jinnah was more or less sure that the Congress having emerged as a well-organised and strong party in the provincial elections and having been installed in office in seven provinces, was in no mood to come to a settlement with the Muslim League.⁴

The relations between the Congress and the Muslim League appeared so unsympathetic that the British Government recorded: “There is no sign of any rapprochement between the Hindus and the Muslims. The case is rather the reverse.”⁵

Jinnah thought that the settlement on equal footing could only be possible if the Congress recognises the Muslim League as the sole representative body of the Muslims. Jinnah, therefore, saw no better way for the solution of the problem than to criticize the Congress vehemently, mainly its policies and actions. Thereafter a number of letters were exchanged between Congress leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Rajendra Prasad and Jinnah and Ismail Khan etc. The extracts of some of these letters would be helpful to know the situation more accurately:

(Extract of the letter dated December 26, 1937,
from Jawaharlal Nehru to Nawab Ismail Khan,
on the Muslim Mass Contact)

You refer to the Congress Mass Contact Movement as if this was started as a challenge to the Muslim League. Allow me to assure you that it is nothing of the kind. It is the natural development of an organisation towards the masses....Whatever the shortcomings and errors of the Congress might be, it is in conception and even in practice a national movement...You refer to the belief that the Congress is trying to destroy Muslim solidarity.... But when we

3 Jamuluddin Ahmed, *Speeches and Writings of Jinnah* (Lahore, 1960), edn. 6, Vol. 1, 1937, p. 27.

4 Khalid B. Sayeed, “The Personality of Jinnah and his Strategy” in C.H. Philips, *The Partition of India* (London, 1970), p. 285.

5 *Fortnightly Reports*, File No. 18/1/40, Pol., Government of India, National Archives, Delhi.

enter the political plane, the solidarity is national not communal . . . The Congress is out to build up national solidarity and at the same time to preserve in every way possible the cultural solidarity of different groups.⁶

This letter clarifies the Congress purposes of the Muslim Mass Contact. Now the next letter dated January 16, 1938 is from Ismail Khan to Nehru on the flag issue:

. . . I need say here that I am not aware that any Muslim organisation has recognised the tri-colour flag as the national flag. I have always understood it to be the Congress flag.

On denial of the national entity of [the tri-colour flag by the Muslim leader, Nehru replied vide his letter dated February 5, 1938:

As for National Flag, it took birth 17 years ago during the early days of the non-cooperation movement . . . In those days Muslims were present in large numbers in the Congress and the flag was frequently used by the Khilafat Committee.⁷

Nehru on behalf of the Congress, thus tried to convince or remind the Muslim leader that the flag, from the very beginning of its birth, was called the national flag. It was at no time a communal or the Congress Party's symbol.⁸ Moreover, Nehru, time and again, tried to convince the Muslim leaders and the Muslim masses that the Congress was fighting for freedom and common purposes. Sometimes he achieved the confidence of the general Muslim citizens. As the government's confidential records appear: "A curious light on this is thrown by the fact that the Khaksars provided a guard of honour for Pt. Nehru. The Khaksars wished to show that they were not to

6 Sadiq Ali, *Congress and the Minorities* (Allahabad, 1947), pp. 172-80.

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 181-3.

8 *Ibid.*

be identified with Muslim League and that Nehru is not considered to be communal-minded."⁹

But on the contrary, Jinnah with some of his bonafide colleagues, continued to express his doubts about the righteousness of the Congress. Nehru, on behalf of the Congress, tried to convince the Muslim leader about the Congress policy and objectives. Jinnah then in his letter dated March 17, 1938, seeks clarification on the following points:

The question... is of safeguarding the rights and the interests of the Musalmans with regard to their religion, culture, language, personal laws, and political rights in the national life, the government and the administration of the country.¹⁰

Jinnah then suggested some solutions which could satisfy the Muslim community. His suggestions were purely on communal basis and the Congress was not in a position to give way to them. However, for the protection of minority, the suggestions were invited by the Congress and later the correspondence between Jinnah, President of the Muslim League and Subhas Chandra Bose, President of the Congress continued for some time but without any success.

Extract from Jinnah's letter dated August 2, 1939, to Bose shows Jinnah's intention to declare the Muslim League the sole representative body of the Indian Muslims and his denial of the Muslim members in the Congress. Bose, in his reply to Jinnah, boldly and frankly criticised Jinnah's communal attitude and discarded his terms and conditions on which he was ready to talk with the Congress. Jinnah was not ready to come for any settlement except on his own conditions and therefore nothing fruitful emerged. Consequently, the General Secretary of the Congress Working Committee, gave a statement on the settlement of Hindu-Muslim question to the Press on January 14, 1939 explaining that although the Working Committee had always been anxious to arrive at a satisfactory

⁹ *Fortnightly Reports*, n. 5.

¹⁰ Sadiq Ali, n. 6, pp. 125-7.

settlement of the communal question with the co-operation of all the parties concerned, but the intention of the Muslim League left little hope in this direction.¹¹

The summary of the letter correspondence was on Congress side a total refusal of the League charges of the Congress persecution. But in spite of all efforts, the Congress had not been able to eliminate communalists from its ranks. In all the conversations Jinnah's aim appeared clear, that he for his political aims, wanted to discredit the Congress claims of representation of both Hindus and Muslims. Secondly, he wished if Congress could recognize the League as the only Muslim party, representing the Indian Muslims.

The British Government had its plan of establishing an all India federation embodied in the Act of 1935. The Congress had countered it with its own plan of a "Constituent Assembly". The Muslim League, while opposing both the British and the Congress plans, had in 1937 virtually no alternative plan of its own. Therefore, mere opposition to the British Plan of an all-India federation and to the Congress Plan of a "Constituent Assembly", was not sufficient. The Muslim League had to put forward an alternative plan of its own. At its annual session held at Lucknow in October, 1937, the Muslim League officially proclaimed its "emphatic" disapproval of the federal scheme of the 1935 Act as being detrimental to the interests of the Muslims in particular.¹² The League apparently reiterated its continued adherence to the idea of a federation as such. The proceedings of the Lucknow session left no doubt as to the direction in which the current of the League politics was set in. Jinnah and other prominent speakers at the session breathed fire and sword against the Congress and the Hindus. Even they accused the British of aiding the Congress in its design of establishing Hindu Raj. Nehru was compelled to comment on the Muslim League Annual Session of 1937: "The League and the supporters stand clearly and definitely today for the decision of India, even on the political and economic plans, into idea of the unity of India. It is a reduction to absurdity of modern life and its problems.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-41.

¹² *The Pioneer* (Allahabad), 7 November 1937.

It is mediaevalism in Jinnah which accused the Congress of trying to 'destroy the Muslim League, divide the Muslims and dominate them', and he added in a warning: 'This will result in India being divided.'¹³

Sir Abdullah Haroon hinted at the possibility of "an independent federation of Muslim states".¹⁴ Fazl-ul-Haq, the Premier of Bengal dreamt fantastically that "if Mohammad-bin-Qasim, an eight year old lad, with 18 soldiers could conquer Sindh, then surely nine crores of Muslims can conquer the whole of India."¹⁵

In December, 1938, the annual session of the All-India Muslim League held at Patna, reiterated its opposition embodied in the 1935 Act and authorized its President, Jinnah to adopt such courses as might be necessary with a view to exploring a suitable alternative to the aforesaid scheme which would safeguard the interests of the Muslims.¹⁶ The idea of the physical division of India was discussed at almost every gathering of *Muslim Leaguers* during 1939.

In the meantime the Congress was put in troubled water. The Congress was openly hostile to the British war effort and its members had resigned office also. Under such circumstances, Jinnah could have easily made one of two tactical mistakes. First, he could have antagonised the British by trying to extract too many concessions from them or he could have adopted the opposite course of whole-hearted co-operation with the British including acceptance of office at the Centre. Jinnah avoided both these alternatives and followed a course of action in which without giving his full co-operation to the British, he was successful in extracting certain real concessions from them.

Moreover, Jinnah took full advantage of the Congress decision to resign office after the outbreak of the war. He called upon the Muslims to celebrate what he designated as the "Deliverance Day" on December 22, 1939.

13 *The Leader* (Allahabad), 11 October 1938.

14 *Times of India* (Delhi), 10 October 1938.

15 *Ibid.*

16 *The Statesman* (Calcutta), 29 December 1938.

This was supposed to be deliverance from "tyranny, oppression and injustice during the last two and a half years". Thus the Congress resignations and later the imprisonment of Congress leaders provided full opportunity to Jinnah to build up his prestige and that of the League. Later on, in 1945, he remarked on his policy of 1939: "There was going to be a deal between Mr. Gandhi and Lord Linlithgow. Providence helped us. The war which nobody welcomes proved to be a blessing in disguise. Meanwhile we did more spade work and then we were sufficiently strong not to be ignored completely."¹⁷

Accordingly in his dealing with the British, Jinnah trod a wary path. He knew that the British, having lost the support of the Congress, would have been reluctant to alienate Muslim public opinion as well. He influenced the Viceroy. As an immediate effect to this, the Viceroy declared in 1940 that the British Government—

could not contemplate the transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life. Nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a government.¹⁸

This was perhaps one of the greatest triumphs that Jinnah had achieved through his brilliant strategy.

More accurately speaking, the idea of the all-India federal scheme embodied in the Act of 1935, was opposed by every section of the people in India. Whatever may have been the motives of the Muslim League and the Congress, it should be noted that both the Muslim League and the Congress opposed the federal scheme for different reasons. The Muslims aimed at securing a more privileged position for themselves while the Congress was striving for a greater control at the Centre.

The Congress opposed the Federation, because the responsi-

¹⁷ J. Ahmed, n. 3, Vol. II, p. 243.

¹⁸ *Speeches by Jinnah*, n. 4, p. 247.

bility that was to be conceded to the Federal Government was wholly inadequate. That is to say, there was dyarchy at the Centre. There were subjects like Finance, Defence and External Affairs which were reserved for the Governor-General, and other subjects were entrusted to Indian hands. The Governor-General might accept the advice of the members of the Executive Council, or he might not. To the Congress, this did not sound like responsible government.¹⁹

At Lucknow on November 20, 1938, in a press interview, Congress President Subhash Bose said:

—Congress is not opposed to the idea of Federation, but to the Federal scheme as envisaged in the Act. Real Federation...will provide for association of the people of British India with the subjects of Indian states in the federal machinery of an emancipated India...²⁰

The Muslim League opposed the Federation on the ground that if the Federation did come into existence it would be dominated by the Hindus. Suleri observed that Jinnah's fears regarding the Federation were well founded for he foresaw that "once saddled in the Centre (Federal Government) the Hindus will be in a commanding position to muzzle the four or five Muslim provinces into complete subordination."²¹ Accordingly the Muslim League Working Committee, at its meeting held at New Delhi on September 18, 1939, passed the resolution that—

The Muslim India is irrevocably opposed to any 'Federal Objective' which must necessarily result in a majority community rule under the guise of democracy and a parliamentary system of government. Such a constitution is totally unsuited to the genius of the peoples of the country which is composed of various nationalities and does not constitute a national state.²²

19 K. P. Bhagat, *Indo-British Relations* (Bombay, 1939), p. 53.

20 *The Statesman* (Calcutta), 21 November 1938.

21 Z. A. Suleri, *My Leader* (Lahore, 1946), p. 83.

22 N. N. Mitra, *Indian Annual Register* (Calcutta, 1939), Vol. II, p. 355.

These facts make clear that the Federation was entirely unacceptable to the League as embodied in the Government of India Act of 1935.

From all these observations certain conclusions are drawn. Firstly, the Congress was firmly determined to get complete independence from Britain under any circumstances. Though the Congress approved of the federal principle, yet it disagreed with Britain over its method of implementing Federation as embodied in the Act of 1935. Secondly, the Muslim League wanted India to be free and independent too, but it did not want the Congress to be the sole monopolising factor in winning independence. For, if the Congress had the monopoly, then the Muslim League might not be able to carry out its own programme and policy. In other words, the Muslim League wanted to share the championship of India's freedom struggle. It did not accept the proposed federal scheme but instead desired a separate federation.

But all presumptions of the Muslim leaders were not true because—

In actual practice it is estimated that Hindus could have won at most 42% of the seats. Moreover, it is clear that the Europeans and the extreme conservatives among the landholders would be certain to hold the balance of power in both the upper and the lower chambers, and could easily block any progressive measures proposed by the representatives of the Congress...²³

It has been claimed that "the rejection of the Federal Part of the Act of 1935 was a great achievement on the part of Jinnah and the Muslim League, because without that there could have been no demand for Pakistan in the coming years".²⁴

While the Congress insisted that a Constituent Assembly would be the answer to the communal problem, the Muslim League, having rejected the federal scheme, resolved that partition was the only practical solution of the problem. In

23 K. L. Maudslayi, *India Without Fabric* (New York, 1942), p. 194.

24 K. P. Bhagat, n. 19, p. 64.

March, 1939, the Muslim League had appointed a small committee to look into various constitutional schemes.²⁵ There were three schemes prepared by Sayyid Abdul Latif, Sikandar Hayat Khan and a joint scheme of Sayyid Zafrul Hasan and Muhammad Afzal Husain Qadri.²⁶ In the same month, the Working Committee of the Muslim League appointed a committee, headed by Jinnah, to examine and report on the various draft schemes "already expounded by those who are fully versed in the constitutional developments of India and other countries and those that may be submitted hereafter to the President and report to the Working Committee their conclusions at an early date."²⁷ The Committee appointed by the Working Committee of the Muslim League presumably examined the "several schemes in the field including that of dividing the country into Muslim and Hindu India"²⁸, but there is no evidence to suggest that its year long deliberations enabled it to reach any final decision and to recommend a particular scheme of its own to the Muslim League Working Committee.

Although soon after the elections in 1937, we find Iqbal urging upon Jinnah for the creation of "a separate federation of Muslim (Majority) Provinces" in the north-west and the north-east. But Jinnah was not so visionary as Iqbals was. Therefore, he apparently decided to wait until the Muslims were sufficiently organised and disciplined.²⁹ As a practical politician he knew that before demanding the creation of a "separate federation of Muslim (Majority) Provinces" he should have a strong and united Muslim party, preferably in control of the governments in the Muslim-Majority Provinces and some definite prospect of British withdrawal from India.

The Muslim League was still very weak and inchoate, and probably it was at the time not in a position to commit itself definitely on the issue, but it could not afford to postpone its

25 *Times of India* (Delhi), 27 March 1939.

26 Z.H. Zaidi in C.H. Philips, ed., n. 4, vol. I, p. 274.

27 *The Pioneer*, 28 March 1939.

28 N.N. Mitra, *Indian Annual Register* (Calcutta, 1939), vol. 1, p. 274.

29 S.R. Mehrotra, in C.H. Philips, ed., n. 4, p. 204.

commitment for long. While opposing both the British and the Congress plans, it had in 1937 virtually no alternative plan of its own. Hitherto, it had at least nominally subscribed to the idea of a loose federation for India, but the results of the 1937 elections, by indicating the position of the Muslims and the Muslim League had forced it to understand its stand.³⁰ It was under these circumstances that when the Congress announced its opposition towards the federal part of the Act 1935, the League more firmly and unitedly opposed the federation which was envisaged by the Act of 1935.

By the way, even at that most critical situation when the League was quite averse to the Congress policy, the Congress seemed to bring a mutual understanding between the Congress and the Muslim League leaders. Jawaharlal Nehru wanted to meet Jinnah and explore the possibilities of settlement but the "Deliverance Day" and all its implications left no room for any helpful talk. Though it was expected that with the resignation of Congress ministries, the communal tension would decrease and favourable atmosphere created for efforts to compose all internal differences. The resolution passed by the Working Committee emphasized that the freedom that the Congress contemplated for the country included the full recognition and protection of the rights of all minorities to which the Congress had always pledged itself. They also emphasized that the easiest method of arriving at the solution of the communal problem was provided by demand for the Constituent Assembly. It (Constituent Assembly) would represent the various parties and interests in the country according to their exact numerical strength and set at rest the otherwise interminable controversies with regard to the representative character of this or that organisation. Muslims would have representation on it to the full extent of their numerical strength in the country through separate electorate, if they so desired. Seats might be reserved for other accepted minorities. It would be the special responsibility of the Constituent Assembly to frame safeguards to the satisfaction of the minorities.³¹ The resolution

³⁰ *Id.*, p. 205.

³¹ *Sadaq Ali*, n. 6, p. 143.

further declared that matters, whereon argument was not possible, would be referred to a previously agreed tribunal. The settling of details was an easy matter if once the proposition that all communities desired independence with a constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly was accepted. This was the most democratic method conceivable in the circumstances for arriving at an agreed solution.³²

While the Congress was popularizing the idea of the Constituent Assembly, the Viceroy attempted "new talks" with the leaders of the Indian political parties. Linlithgow and Gandhiji met for two hours and a half on 5th February; they decided to defer temporarily at least further discussions on future constitutional developments in India. An agreed communique was issued after the meeting.³³ It stated that the Viceroy stressed the desire of the British Government to grant India Dominion status at the earliest date and had suggested that the Federal Scheme Act, in suspense during the war, was the surest stepping stone to that end. The communique asserted as follows:

He (the Viceroy) emphasized in the first place their earnest desire that India should attain Dominion status at the earliest possible moment, and to facilitate the achievement of the status by all means in their power . . . He made clear also the anxiety of His Majesty's Government to shorten the transitional period and bridge it as effectively as possible.³⁴

Gandhi, after the meeting with the Viceroy expressed his views before the Press:

The vital difference between the Congress demand and the Viceroy's offer consists of the fact that the Viceroy's offer contemplates final determination of India's destiny by the British Government, whereas the Congress contemplates just the contrary. The Congress position is that the test

32 *Ibid.*

33 N.N. Mitra, *Indian Annual Register* (Calcutta, 1940), vol. 1, pp. 302-6.

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 220-21.

of real freedom consists in the people of India determining their own destiny without any outside interference.³⁵

On the same day the Viceroy and Muslim League President, Jinnah met together. After their meeting a statement was issued to the effect that the Viceroy had assured Jinnah of the British Government's full responsibility for safeguarding the legitimate interests of the minorities and that Jinnah need not be under any apprehension that the importance of these matters would be minimized.³⁶ Jinnah reported to the Council of the All India Muslim League on 25th February that the Viceroy had assured him that the whole scheme of the 1935 Act would be examined afresh, and that His Majesty's Government were fully alive to the importance of Muslims and any settlement which ignored the Muslims would be unthinkable.³⁷ Jinnah took the "August offer" as victory stand.

It was probably this assurance which encouraged Jinnah to pass famous Lahore Resolution.

Meanwhile, the fifty-third session of the All India National Congress met at Ramgarh under the Presidentship of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, between 16th and 20th March. It adopted a momentous resolution previously passed by the Congress Working Committee at Patna. It contained three important points. Firstly, "the Congress cannot in any way, directly or indirectly, be party to the war, which means continuance and perpetuation of this exploitation." Secondly, it demanded in unequivocal terms that "nothing short of complete independence" was acceptable to the people of India. And thirdly:

No permanent solution is possible except through a constituent assembly (elected on the basis of adult franchise), where the rights of all recognized minorities will be fully protected by agreement, as far as possible, between the elected representatives of the various majority and minority groups, or by arbitration if agreement is not reached on the

35 *Ibid.*, pp. 221-2.

36 K. P. Bhagat, n. 19, p. 92.

37 *Ibid.*

point.³⁸

Clearly enough the Congress on the one hand, did not want Britain's war nor Dominion Status; it only wanted complete independence and a Constituent Assembly, and on the other, the Congress was not unrealistic towards the Communal problem as Gandhi's utterance shows: "I still believe that without Hindu-Muslim settlement there can be no Swaraj...God makes no distinction between Hindus and Muslims."³⁹ Furthermore, he reflected:

...Compromise is in my very being. I will go to the Viceroy fifty times if there is need for it...if you have a suspicion that I will compromise, you might believe that the compromise will not be at the cost of the country. The basis of my fight is love for the opponent.⁴⁰

But as it seems, Jinnah was no more ready for any compromise.

The historic Ramgarh session of the Congress was followed by the historic Lahore session of the Muslim League. It was the twenty-seventh session of the Muslim League which was held from 22nd March to 24th March, 1940.

The background of Lahore Resolution is as well interesting and relevant. During the years 1938 and 1939 various proposals for a separate Muslim League had come to the League by different individuals. Some of those proposals were proposed by Abdul Latif of Hyderabad, by Sir Sikandar Khan, the then Premier of Panjab, by Mian Kifayat Ali and by Syed Zafarul Hasan and M. Afzal Qadri of Aligarh. The Muslim League took these proposals quite seriously and appointed a committee to examine the above proposed scheme regarding the partition of India.⁴¹ The committee consisted of the following members:

(1) M.A. Jinnah (President)

38 Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Unity of India* (London, 1941), pp. 414-15; also N.N. Mitra, n. 33, 1940, Vol. 1, p. 229, and Sadiq Ali, n. 6, pp. 146-7.

39 Mitra, *ibid.*, p. 233.

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 233-4.

41 Sharifuddin Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan* (Karachi, 1970) p. xxi.

- (2) Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan
- (3) Nawab Muhammad Ismail Khan Saheb
- (4) Syed Abdul Aziz Saheb
- (5) Sir Abdullah Haroon
- (6) Sir Nazimuddin
- (7) Abdul Matin Chaudhary Saheb
- (8) Sardar Aurangzeb Khan Saheb
- (9) Liaquat Ali Saheb (Convenor)

The Committee was formed in the early March, 1939 and the whole year it was engaged with the examining of the proposals. Thus the Muslim League came into the practical politics regarding the partition of India. In February, 1940, the Working Committee of the All India Muslim League met at Delhi and discussed on the various proposals. Choudhary Khaliquzzaman gives his report of the proceedings of the committee which was held on February 4, 1940:

I also pointed out to the members that recently Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan had published a scheme for the future Constitution of India in which he had proposed the division of India into seven different zones, and had also provided for a confederal structure. Personally I said I would suggest confining our demand to the separation of Muslim zones, viz., N.W.F.P., Sind, Baluchistan and Panjab in the North-West and Bengal and Assam in the East, and would leave the rest to the Congress to deal with. At this stage, Sir Sikandar, who was sitting to the right of Mr. Jinnah, started pleading for his confederal scheme and Mr. Jinnah opposing it. The discussion went on for about two hours, when finally, with the concurrence of the members, Mr. Jinnah rejected Sir Sikandar's scheme and entered in his note-book my suggestion with approval.⁴²

Later on, when the resolution was finally prepared for being placed in the Lahore Session of the Muslim League, some

⁴² Choudhary Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore, 1961), pp. 233-4.

persons played important role in the making of the famous Lahore Resolution. Mainly Jinnah, Sikandar Hayat, Abdullah Haroon, even Fazl-ul-Haq were associated to the resolution.

The Lahore Resolution virtually started on 22nd March, 1940. Before the opening of the session, Jinnah is reported to have met the Viceroy and conveyed to him that the Muslim League in its session at Lahore was going to demand the partition of India.⁴³

This is much interesting to note that before the declaration of the famous resolution, in the first sitting of its Twenty-seventh session on 22 March 1940, the Muslim leaders discussed on the communal question. Shah Nawaz said:

As many as 25 attempts had been made in the last quarter of the century, but no settlement had yet been arrived at. The reason for the breakdown of negotiations on every occasion had been that the Congress refused to accept the basic principle of separate electorates for the Musalmans; and if they did so, they did it in a form in which the Musalmans could not maintain their identity and independence.⁴⁴

In the Presidential address Jinnah explained the growing strength and confidence of the Muslim organisation. "Muslim India is now conscious", he said, "is now awake, and the Muslim League has now grown into such a strong institution that it cannot be destroyed by anybody, whoever he may happen to be. Men may come and men may go, but the League will live for ever."⁴⁵ He also criticized Congress rule over the Muslim minority.

Explaining the solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem he indicated that partition was the only solution. For the support of his idea he quoted Lala Lajpat Rai's version, "...about...the Hindu-Mohammedan unity,...I have devoted most of my time during the last sixth months,...and I am inclined to think it is neither possible nor practicable."⁴⁶ Lala Lajpat Rai had uttered

43 Sharifuddin Pirzada, n. 41, p. xxii.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 326.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 329.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 335.

this during the civil disobedience movement. It is notable that Jinnah who always criticized Lala Lajpat Rai regarding him as Maha-Hindu sabhaist, now was shrewd enough to quote him to serve his purpose.

Jinnah in his historical speech justified the partition of India and the demand for having a separate Muslim land. He concluded with the following statement:

It is extremely difficult to appreciate why our Hindu friends fail to understand the real nature of Islam and Hinduism. They are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are in fact, different and distinct social orders. It is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever endure a common nationality, and this misconception of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits, and is the cause of most of our troubles and will lead India to destruction, if we fail to revise our nations in time...it is quite clear that Hindus and Musalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different, and they have different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other, and likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority must lead to grouping discontent and the final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state.⁴⁷

Continuing his statement, he said: "Muslims are a nation according to any definition of a nation, and they must have their homelands, their territory and their state."⁴⁸ Further he declared:

The problem in India is not of an inter-communal character, but manifestly of an international one, and it must be treated as such...If the British Government are really in earnest and are sincere the only course open to us all is to allow the

47 *IND*, pp. 337-8.

48 *IND*, p. 312.

major nations separate homelands by dividing India into 'autonomous national states'.⁴⁹

It is amusing to note that Jinnah did not use the word Pakistan in his entire speech. But next day the League unanimously adopted the famous Lahore resolution popularly known as Pakistan. The resolution says in brief the following:

- (a) ...This session of the All India Muslim League emphatically reiterates that the scheme of Federation embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935 is totally unsuited to and unworkable in peculiar conditions of this country and is altogether unacceptable to Muslim India.
- (b) ...Muslim India will not be satisfied unless the whole constitutional plan is reconsidered *de novo* and that no revised plan would be acceptable to the Muslims unless it is passed with their approval and consent.
- (c) ...That no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute units which shall be autonomous and sovereign.⁵⁰

Further, it dealt with the provision of "adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards" in the constitution for the minorities. Critics comment that the resolution was somewhat vague. It spoke of more than one sovereign state and referred in a very general way to territorial adjustments. Jinnah was criticised

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

⁵⁰ *Sadiq Ali*, *ii*, 6, p. 207.

for not giving a clear picture of all the details of his Pakistan scheme. But, again, it was clear that Jinnah's position was growing from strength to strength.

There is no doubt that the Muslim League's demand for partition led to two important contradictory effects. At first, the demand was opened to obvious criticism. It was a grave blow to the ideal of a united India which generations of Indians had cherished and laboured for. It was considered to be retrograde, impracticable and dangerous. It cleared a fact that if religion were to be acknowledged as the criterion of nationality and each nationality allowed to have a separate homeland for itself, it would mean the Balkanization of India. If the non-Muslims were to continue staying—as most League leaders assured they would—in the areas claimed for Pakistan, how would those areas be different in political competition and power from what they were at present and in what sense would they become Islamic?⁵¹ Similarly, if democracy was not suited to India, as the League leaders claimed, how would it become suited to Pakistan? It was forecast that the division of India would not solve the problem of the minorities. Mehrotra puts a very remarkable comment that the Muslims in India would raise the cry of oppression at the hands of the Hindus and the Hindus in Pakistan would raise a similar cry, and there would be retaliatory wars.⁵²

After three decades have passed, we find the same condition is prevailing on.

On the other hand, the Lahore resolution for Pakistan closed all doors of the hope for reconciliation between the Congress and the League. From now onwards, it became crystal clear that if for the Congress nothing short of complete independence was a must, then for the Muslim League nothing short of Pakistan was a must.⁵³

About two weeks after, Gandhi wrote that the Muslim League had created a "baffling situation" at Lahore⁵⁴. Though he

51 S.R. Mehrotra, in C.H. Philips, ed., n. 4 p. 24.

52 *Ibid.*

53 K.P. Bhagat, n. 19, p. 97.

54 *Ibid.*

still continued to strive for unity, he maintained that without communal unity no independence was possible and did not believe that the Muslims wanted to vivisect India. Sometimes it seemed as if he ignored the seriousness of the problem and went on stressing upon his old ideal without caring for the response of the people. The crux of the problem was whether the delay such as Gandhi envisaged could have staved off the partition. The political temperature had risen; the Muslim League was adamant either to "divide or destroy India". Gandhi's plan that there should be "Peace before Pakistan" did not impress the League. The League's argument was that there could be no peace until Pakistan was established. So far as Nehru's role is concerned, to him it was already clear by the end of 1939 that Jinnah would neither settle with the Congress nor embroil himself with the government.

Moreover, the Lahore session of the League in March, 1940 made the gulf wider. The "Pakistan resolution" as it came to be known, gave a new twist to the communal problem. All the solutions hitherto thought of—separate electorates, composite cabinets, reservations of posts—suddenly became out of date. Nehru's immediate reaction was that "all the old problems... pale into insignificance before the latest stand taken by the Muslim League leaders at Lahore. The whole problem has taken a new complexion and there is no question of settlement or negotiations now."⁵⁵ However, the reactions of the different prominent leaders of the day came in different way. Gandhi reacted calling the two-nation theory as "an untruth" that he had already been calling. Rajagopalachari called it "a mediaeval conception".⁵⁶ Azad described it "meaningless and absurd".⁵⁷ Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, Premier of Punjab rejected the idea of the partition of India outright. Syed Habibul Rahman, a leader of the Krishak Praja Party, said that the proposal was not only absurd, chimerical and visionary but "will for ever remain a castle in air...The Indians, both

⁵⁵ B.R. Nanda, *Nehru the Congress and Partition of India*, in C.H. Philips ed. n. 4, p. 166.

⁵⁶ *The Hindu* (Madras), 27 March 1940.

⁵⁷ *The Tribune* (Lahore), 11 September 1940.

Hindus and Muslims live in a common motherland, use the offshoots of a common language and literature, and are proud of the noble heritage...there is no one among Hindus or Muslims who will be prepared to sacrifice all this in order to accept what is demanded by Mr. Jinnah."⁵⁸

"For the moment" wrote *Manchester Guardian*, "Mr. Jinnah has re-established the reign of chaos in India."⁵⁹

On the other hand, *The Statesman* viewed: "Partition, we have to recognize, is becoming a live issue. If India receives Dominion status, - partition seems the inevitable result in view of the attitude which the Muslim community appears disposed to adopt."⁶⁰

Moreover, dealing with the effects of the Lahore resolution, it can also be noted that Jinnah was proved now to be more powerful among his group than even Gandhi in the Congress. It was perhaps easier to keep homogeneity among one section of people mainly on religious basis as Jinnah did than to hold control on a united section of people which Gandhi was doing.

Some fortnightly reports of that period recorded by the government are very much relevant here. The reports show the political and communal situation of these provinces. It also shows the reactions of the Lahore resolutions. On the basis of several press reports it can be concluded that by that time the masses were distinctly divided into two parts—in favour of the Congress and in favour of the Muslim League and likewise the Muslim demands. While the Hindu sections of the magazines criticised and disapproved the Lahore resolutions, the Muslim papers approved and praised the Muslim demands. The *Al-Burhar* from Akola criticized the Congress policy and observed that "Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Rajagopalachari and others have not tried to understand the meaning of the Lahore resolution at all."⁶¹ It expressed that the Lahore resolution was advantageous to both the communities. Likewise the *Al Faruq* from

58 *The Hindu*, 4 April 1940.

59 *Manchester Guardian*, 2 April 1940.

60 S.R. Mehrotra, in C.H. Philips, ed., n. 4, p. 208.

61 Fortnightly Reports, n. 5.

Kamptee welcomed the observance of the Muslim Independence Day and told that the Muslims had by then decided about their future political India and they were ready for all sacrifices to have their objects.⁶² Further, some relevant reports of the *Fortnightly Reports* are reproduced below to understand the political situation :

.....

**Fortnightly Report of Central Provincial Press
Adviser—First half of April 1940.⁶³**

Communal—In the Nagpur Division a Hindu Mahasabha meeting, attended by about 1,000 persons, was held on 31st March. The main speakers—Vishwasrao Daware and Vinayak Maharaj Masurkar. Former criticised Mahatma Gandhi—and praised Mr. Sawarkar and late Mr. Tilak. He condemned Jinnah's two nation theory. The latter criticised Gandhi and expressed that Hindu-Muslim unity was not necessary for gaining freedom and that, if the Hindus united, the Muslims would be afraid. He advised the youngers to carry lathis for self-defence. The Mahasabha celebrated the Hindu New Year day on the 8th April by taking out a procession of 1500 including 400 the Hindu militia.

Second half of April 1940

Communal—The Muslims observed "Partition day" on the 19th April at several places in the province. Well attended meetings were held at Nagpur, Jubbalpur, Balaghat, etc. The resolution of Lahore was explained—The speeches in favour of League and Partition of India. Maulana Burhanul Huq's speech at Jubbalpur meeting is reported to be objectionable. He made frequent references to Hindus describing them as 'Kafirs'.

.....

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

Indian Politics⁶⁴

The Pakistan scheme continues to hold the field in the Press. The Hindu Press makes it clear that Mr. Jinnah's ultimate aim is to re-establish Muslim Raj in the whole of India by following Hitlerian tactics after dividing India into Hindu India and Muslim India. The *Searchlight* (2nd April 1940) says: "Mr. Jinnah has been dreaming of imitating the German Fuehrer at a later stage in demanding, under the threat of armed invasion, redress of the grievances of the Muslim nationals in the Hindu states." The *Ittehad* (7th April 1940) advises the Congress to admit the separate entity of Muslims instead of trying to absorb them. The *Naqeeb* (30th March 1940) criticises the Muslim League and the Punjab Press for their enmity towards the Pant Ministry in the United Provinces for the firing on Khaksars at Buland-shahar, while keeping quiet over the firing at Lahore by the Sikandar Ministry. It also criticised the Muslim League for betraying the Moslems for Rai Bahadur Shyam Nandan Sahay who is a Hindu. The *Indian Nation* (6th April 1940) calls upon the British Government to "make a definite and decisive move forward and not merely wobble at the obstreperousness of the Congress or the intransigence of the minorities". The *Hamzad* (24th March 1940) threatens that 30,000 Khaksars (quotas allotted to provinces) would march into the Punjab within a week if the Punjab Government did not come to terms with the Khaksars.

The *Searchlight* has the following on 9th April 1940: "If, however, they (the British Government) will not see the obvious writing on the wall of time, evident to every student of recent international events in the light of present happenings, one can but note the tragedy of a statesmanship gone wool gathering at the height of glory. Frankly speaking, there will not be many to shed tears over the catastrophe... Heads I win, tails you lose, is the motto of Mr. Jinnah, sure, snug and safe in the hope and fact of British patrons. The other day Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan pompously announced that the Leaguers declined to draw the chestnuts out of the fire for the

Congress if the Congress is so perilously near drowning that it must catch at such straws as Nawabzadas, Nawabs, Sirs, Khan Bahadurs and Khan Sahibs disporting the liveries of their masters and allies. Mr. Jinnah and his lieutenants do not choose to realize that realities are more real than wishful thinking. Under the stress of necessity the Moslem League has dissolved itself and embraced the Hindus, and adopted joint electorates in Sind. In Punjab, the late Sir Fazle Hussain died, an avowed convert to the idea of joint electorates. Mr. Jinnah will find that the Sikhs and the Jats are by no means the mouthfuls he had made the mistakes imagining nor are so the Hindus of Bengal. Nor, again, need Mr. Jinnah be cocksure that his British patrons will pamper him to the extent of agreeing to interpose a Moslem belt, extending from the frontiers of India to the heart of Central Asia, on the flank of such a cherished possession as India. But the all knowing compound of conceit and ambition, to wit Mr. Jinnah, cannot help his illusions, the most glaring among them being that he is the monarch of all he surveys and can, therefore, dictate his terms. . . The doyens of Indian Liberalism are staging a comeback from their caves of Adulm to play their characteristic role. It may be said to their credit that this time they are coming with reinforcements—Vir Damodar Savarkar, the revolutionary turned moderate, on the one hand, and Dr. Ambedkar, the man of many roles, on the other . . . What is tragedy itself is that not even their British allies seem willing to take them seriously so that, neglected by their patrons and repudiated by their own people with neither mooring nor anchor, they can but remain floating in the air, so many dotty patches on the Indian sky incapable alike of shade and of moisture."

Criticism of Government

Commenting on His Excellency the Governor's speech at the Bihar Chamber of Commerce the *Indian Nation* (6th April 1940) says: "His Excellency Sir Thomas Stewart's replies to some of the problems raised by Mr. Jain are model of bureaucratic evasiveness while some others are somewhat more encouraging. Referring to the constitutional deadlock in the provinces, he

said that 'the present situation is not one which we have sought nor is it one which we would seek to perpetuate'. Following His Excellency's own dictum we refrain from entering into the realms of political controversy in this article. Nevertheless we welcome the assurance that the present situation is not one that 'we (meaning presumably the British Government) would seek to perpetuate'. Secondly, we are struck by Sir Thomas Stewart's remarks about planned economy. We are not sticklers for words and phrases so long as the kernel of a thing is there, and therefore, we profess no particular fascination for the phrase, 'planned economy'. Nevertheless, namely, that 'when trade gets into a mess, Government must get it out'. So little and so few have been the endeavours of Governments in this country to develop trade and industry on a systematic basis that they cannot disparage and stigmatise 'trade' as being inclined to get into a mess obviously through its own faults. We in India cannot afford to cavil at 'planned economy' when there is so little of industrial progress along right lines and when as it happens there is so little co-ordination between the various factors making for a synthesised industrial and economic development and so few efforts imbued with and inspired by the concentrated objective of achieving a common national end. Sir Thomas Stewart's remarks on the electrification scheme and the sugar industry are definitely disappointing. If his query about the electrification scheme, namely, 'Is the scheme practical?' is to be taken as providing a clue to his mind, then we should not be accused of pessimism if we doubt that the public's anticipations about its accomplishment are not capable of realization. There is no point in putting that question at this stage, because we thought that there was such overwhelming agreement about its practicability, though there may have been differences of opinion about the details thereof. The sugar industry has been assured of an examination of its case as put forward by the Sugar Syndicate at its last meeting in Lucknow and one can only hope that the examination will prove fruitful of some good to the industry. Sir Thomas Stewart's reference to the labour problem 'which is assuming a sinister aspect' is welcome. While the 'trader justification' he pleaded for the co-operative relation-

tation enquiry will carry conviction only when Government display the needed imagination to evolve a scheme which will result in the substantial restoration of agricultural credit through the movement."

The Defence Department of the Government of India comes in for criticism. The *Indian Nation* (9th April 1940) says: "We cannot but consider it as an utterly short-sighted and unstatesmanlike policy for the Government of India to assume that stiff and unsympathetic attitude they have done during the Central Legislature session. It only exasperates and does not mollify or satisfy and that too at a time when the war situation in Europe is becoming increasingly dangerous and the need for Indian co-operation becomes more pressing".

.....

Fortnightly Report on the Political Situation in Bengal for the second half of April 1940⁶⁵

...The most dramatic event of the fortnight has undoubtedly been the Aldermanic elections to the Calcutta Corporation followed shortly afterwards by the election of a Moslem Leaguer to the Mayoralty on the Moslem League *cum* Subhas Bose vote. The events have been sufficiently startling to satisfy the most hardened. Political manoeuvring was known to have been going on for some days before the actual date of election for the 5 seats of Aldermen. A pact between the Subhas Bose group and the Moslem League, according to which the Moslem League was to get 2 seats of Aldermen and Subhas Bose's party 3 seats with an understanding that the Mayoralty should go to a Moslem Leaguer, brought about as it was by a mutual failure to find adherents either in the ranks of the Europeans or of the Mahasabha, has been the subject of bitter attack in practically every Hindu newspaper in the Province. The attackers of Subhas Bose—and they have been many—in order to make their denunciation all the more arresting have seized with enthusiasm on all those outstanding events in his past career

which might have been expected to point to the impossibility of an alliance by him with Moslem as opposed to Hindu interests. The main point of criticism, a point which has been reiterated more and more definitely though with varying degrees of venom as the days have passed, is that by such an action not only have the Hindus been split into two camps but that (even more abhorrent to the orthodox Congress point of view) the alliance of the Subhas Bose section of the Hindus with the Moslem League, coupled with the speeches and articles of Mr. Subhas Bose justifying his action, has resulted in the recognition of the Moslem League as the body representing Moslem opinion in the city. The Moslem view, rather less vocal, has insisted that all that has happened has been a combination for the popular good of two important parties—the Congress Municipal Association and the Moslem League Municipal Association—for no other purpose and with no larger significance than the improvement of civic administration. The Bose supporters have insisted that the result has been the isolation of the Europeans—the representatives of British Imperialism—and that the collaboration with the Moslem League has opened the way to the possibility of the inauguration of a new era in Bengal politics. It is stressed that such a result is much to be desired and can only result in an advantage to Calcutta. At the same time it is admitted that such a union was only brought about by the impossibility of a union with the other Hindu Mahasabha interest in the Corporation. Present impressions lead undoubtedly to the conclusion that these political manoeuvres have only resulted in a further discrediting of Mr. Subhas Bose and are likely to result in a still further disintegration of the Congress organisation in the Province. It is generally felt that Mr. Subhas Bose has been still further discredited by the fact that while the Moslem League have been prepared to combine with him over municipal politics Government have not hesitated, when Provincial interests indicated that such a course was necessary to arrest with a view to their ultimate internment a number of prominent Forward Block leaders in the Province.

What has made the general situation all the more piquant has been the fact that political discussions centering round the debates in Parliament on Indian affairs, criticisms of the

Pakistan scheme and accounts of the preparation for civil disobedience movement, involving a possible conflict between Congress and the Moslem League, have been hotly debated in the Province. The speech of the Secretary of State has generally met with an unfavourable reception both from Moslems and Hindus—each seizing on those portions of the speech which gave them offence. The disregard of the Pakistan scheme is adversely criticised by the Moslem League adherents. On the other hand the suggestion that on account of differences between the Congress, the Moslems, the Liberals and the Princes it is necessary for the British to remain in India so as to evolve a practicable constitutional scheme in consultation with all parties is criticised as being not only unacceptable but also as a failure to make any fresh contribution to the solution of the problem. The convention that the attitude of the Congress has been largely responsible for the present stalemate is accepted by the Moslem League press but is challenged by the Hindu "nationalist" press as is also the claim that the British Government have a duty, based on historical reasons, to shape India's future. What has come in for the largest measure of condemnation from the Hindu "nationalist" press, however, has been the assumption by the Secretary of State that a reference to the Moslem League is a reference to the Moslems of India. The general impression is that the solution of the problem which the Secretary of State is anxious to find has not been advanced either by the speech or by its reception.

The Pakistan scheme has served both as a reason and as an opportunity to the "nationalist" press to attack the Moslem League. Prominence has been given to the meetings denouncing the proposals not only in Bengal but also throughout India. Criticisms have been based on first principles—on the assumption that any such proposal is *ipso facto* impracticable—rather than on a close examination of the problem. In many quarters there is refusal even to consider the scheme as being a serious one. The holding of the All-India Azad Moslem Conference at Delhi has been seized on by the "nationalist" press as a golden opportunity to demonstrate how insignificant in their opinion is the number in favour of the Pakistan scheme and how unwarranted is the claim, accepted more and

more in official circles, that the Moslem League represents Moslem opinion in India. Against this chorus of denunciations there has, from time to time, however, appeared dignified protests against the tendency to discredit the Pakistan scheme merely because it has emanated from the Moslem League. Publicity has been given, particularly in the Moslem press, stressing the history of the proposal and showing that the idea is not a new one, and that its essence—the recognition of the difference between Moslem and Hindu cultures and ways of life—has been accepted before and (at one time) by, among others, the present President of the Congress itself. In spite of very carefully prepared publicity the All-India Azad Conference has completely failed to touch or interest the large majority of Moslems in this Province and it is significant that when commenting on the results of the Conference it had to be admitted that much leeway would have to be made up and a considerable amount of organisation would be necessary before it would be possible to dislodge the League from its present authoritative position in the country. Though the Pakistan scheme itself has been supported and applauded in the press favourable to the Moslem League and a number of meetings have been held in support of the idea it is yet too early to appreciate the real extent of the enthusiasm aroused while, as mentioned in an earlier report, the implications of the scheme are probably still only understood by a few.

Fortnightly Press Report of the Provincial Press Adviser,
Government of Bihar, ending the 30th April, 1940⁶⁶

Communal

The *Indian Nation* (17th April, 1940) declares the objective of Hindu organisation to be internationalism. "The Hindu religion is really international in its tenets and ideals as its enormous assimilative capacity through the centuries has demonstrated."

Political

1. *Separate electorates*—Reviewing Sir Sultan Ahmad's speech

tragedy hitherto has been that the Musalmans of sterling worth have allowed themselves to be browbeaten into retirement thus leaving the field open to the careerists who thrive on the exploitation of the ignorance and weaknesses of the masses...The leaders of the Delhi Conference have now to go to the masses and help them to recognise their own sentiments and find voice to utter them themselves."

"Monitor" writes in the *Behar Herald* (16th April, 1940): "It is impossible to believe in the sincerity of Lord Zetland when he says that 'he and his people shall continue to labour wholeheartedly and to the best of our ability for such a reconciliation' between the two communities in India, if one remembers that it is statesmen like him who introduced communal electorates in India even at the time of the grant of the first instalment of constitutional reform and that they made the vicious communal award the very corner-stone of the existing constitution. To take a recent instance, Mr. Jinnah's rise into power and importance is very largely attributable to the inexplicable silence maintained by the provincial governors on Mr. Jinnah's charge of oppression of Muslims by the Congress Ministries. To cite the latest instance, the comments of the *London Times* on the Lahore resolution of the League is a clear and deliberate incitement to the Muslims to go ahead with their demand by the partition of India. Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar has very pertinently observed that the editorial comments in the *Times* have removed the last shreds of any belief that existed in Mahatma Gandhi's mind in the sincerity and reality of the so-called offer of the Viceroy which is stated to be still kept open but which is carefully linked up to Mussalman feeling independent of facts and practicability."

3. *Charkha*—The *Sentinel* (14th April, 1940) has the following: "No level-headed person has ever supposed that the charkha possesses the magic powers attributed to it. The cult is turning men into women. To say that the charkha provided bread to the famishing wretches in the countryside is to insult one's intelligence. All the profit from khadi is flowing into the pockets of a select few. They are the capitalists who are running the khadi organisations from the background. The Mahatma has the fondest regard for them."

4. *Parliamentary debate on India*—The *Indian Nation* (21st April, 1940) says: "The Parliamentary debate degenerated into a rehash and recapitulation of platitudinous banalities, a tiresome repetition of the same sentiments and statements which found expression in previous debates, a monotonous reiteration of the various objections which the British Government find in the way of any further advance... But obligations towards the minorities involve also the right to impress upon them that they cannot hold up progress by unconscionable demands or by intransigence."

The *Searchlight* (20th April, 1940) says: "Lord Zetland cannot commune with his Creator without a longing, lingering solicitude for Indian Musalmans, the loyal and convenient flock entrusted to his safe keeping, a charge on his honour and conscience by virtue of a divine charter on this behalf proclaimed into his sacred ears by esoteric means, beyond the understanding of mere mortals. This time His Lordship took his stand and balanced himself on the springs of history. The peaceful evolution of Moslem minorities under aegis of that eighth of wonders, the magnificent administrative unity established by the British Empire, has inspired him to the language of almost lyrical ecstasy... But this apart, his thesis comes to this, in view of what is happening, that while no constitution can be forced upon 80 millions—assuming the accuracy of the figure for argument's sake—it can be forced on the remaining nearly 300 millions of Indians at the bidding of and with a view to humour the favoured minority of 80 million. In other words, the very hon'ble Lord Zetland, who represents the acme of British justice and the cream of British fair-play, would invest the Moslem community with, to quote the *London Times*, a permanent veto on Indian constitutional progress." No wonder he has gone as near blessing Mr. Jinnah's treasonable scheme of disrupting and dismembering India as he could consistently with elementary decencies. He proclaims nonetheless that he fully appreciates "the grounds on which this proposal is based". Lord Zetland and his fellow imperialists can please themselves. Compromise in this context is impossible. India's millions minus the pampered 80 million, are no sheep cowering in terror before the infuriated John Bull and prepared to be whipped into feeding on successive crumbs thrown

from the master's tables. Lord Zetland cannot be contemptuous of Nationalist India and yet have the effrontery to talk of compromise and peace. If this is statesmanship, we do not envy it. We will not beat about the bush. Nationalist India will fight to the last the arrogance of Lord Zetland's assumptions.

The *Yogi* (26th April, 1940) takes up Sir Hugh O'Neill's threat of resistance of Civil Disobedience and declares India's determination not to render any help to Britain unless Britain intentions are purified.

5. The *Indian Nation's* (27th April, 1940) attitude towards Europeans in India can be summed up as follows: "Where, however, the European Association and individual Europeans are wrong in understanding the psychology of India is when they think that Indian resources can be mobilised merely for the asking and as the Government want them to be mobilised. That it is possible to do so we do not question; but the point is whether it is being done absolutely with India's consent? The meeting of the speakers of the South Indian Association failed to understand that the moment the British Government exhibit sufficient imagination to appreciate and satisfy the Indian aspirations there will be no need for extraneous effort or the use of any kind of force to mobilise the Indian resources. On the other hand, they will mobilise themselves. If instead of realising this fundamental fact, Europeans in India resort to bamboozling and dragooning India into an attitude of cooperation by threats and perverse obstruction to the fulfilment of her aspirations or attempt to interpose obstacles in its way they will soon find that they are going absolutely the wrong way about to achieve the end in view."

6. *Non-official advisers*— The *Indian Nation* (28th April, 1940) recommends non-official advisers who are not members of the legislature. It feels that selected members of the legislature are not likely to accept the post.

The *Searchlight* (25th April, 1940) has an article on "Make-Believes" in which appointment of non-official advisers is considered 'by no means unlikely', 'by no means improbable' 'for Britishers are seasoned specialists on the art and practice of deception'. 'Many a mouth will water at the prospect'. 'power incubated British statesmen are evidently busy building

castles in the air'. 'If the bureaucracy consider that make-believes will avail them, all that we can say is that they are greater simpletons than we had thought.'

7. *Civil Disobedience*.—Quoting with approval Mahatma Gandhi's article in the *Harijan*, the *Indian Nation* (30th April, 1940) comments: "The question that we ask is: Is civil disobedience whether on a mass scale or on a restricted scale imperative and necessary at all?...But it is difficult to convince ourselves that civil disobedience, even on a restricted scale, will not in the present surcharged atmosphere evoke hostile feelings among Britishers and among some sections of Indians which may culminate in rioting and bloodshed, without any one intending and anticipating it.

...If Mahatma Gandhi is sincerely anxious for a settlement and we can have no doubt about it,—it is for him, as a votary of truth and non-violence, to make the first move. The British Government's responsibility is also very great in this regard and it is absolutely essential for them to take a bold initiative and declare themselves in favour of some modified but satisfactory method of calling Indian representatives into consultation with regard to the framing of the future constitution. So intolerable is the present position—that if a proposal in this regard emanates from the Congress, the British Government can have no face to refuse to accept it. In this connection we ask: Is it profitable to harp interminably and insistently on the constituent assembly idea? A modified proposal for a representative to agree upon the details of a constitution which can be put before a larger elected body later should satisfy the conditions which the Congress has proposed in this connection."

8. *Defence of India Rules*.—The *Yogi* (19th April, 1940) criticises the rule-giving power to the Railway to refuse to carry individuals and suspects that it is an attempt to isolate political leaders in the event of Civil Disobedience.

A General Election

The *Indian Nation* (18th April, 1940) said: "At the moment when the whole position is confusion and chaos, a general election will further complicate and confound the situation without

clarifying anything."

Fortnightly Report on the events in Bihar during the second half of April 1940⁶⁷

Political—As may be inferred from my last fortnightly report, National Week terminated with even less enthusiasm than it started. In several districts the Week was not observed at all. The delaying tactics of the Congress High Command are causing considerable irritation and dissatisfaction among the Leftists and many subordinate leaders of the Right Wing are reported to regard the satyagraha programme with disfavour. The Leftists are reluctant to act as they admit that only Mr. Gandhi is capable of launching the movement with any hope of success. Many of them are consequently giving lip service to the Right Wing in the hope that they will be able to transform any satyagraha initiated by that Wing into a mass revolutionary movement. The satyagraha training camp at Sonapore was attended by about 350 followers of Dr. Rajendra Prasad each armed with a charkha and they are reported to have spun over 400 miles of yarn! This gathering of the disciples of the cult of non-violence attracted Jogendra Shukul and Dr. Keshav Prashad and several others hitherto associated with a different school of thought. Their attendance at the camp is probably no more than a dodge to evade arrest. It seems that the Socialist Party also has instructed all its members to take the pledge of non-violence and others will undoubtedly do the same as a measure of safety. The training camp at Sonapore has ended and now efforts are being made to hold similar training camps in each district. It is not clear how the training at these satyagraha camps and the skill acquired in playing the charkha is going to help the followers of Mr. Gandhi. The only object probably is to find out how many persons are likely to follow Mr. Gandhi unto the last and stick to a programme of Civil Disobedience which he may launch. At the Sonapore camp and at a few other places the ex-Ministers delivered lectures on the utility of the training and also subjects like Dominion Status, etc. As reported before, in

Action under the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act, 1931.

Serial No.	Name of (a) Newspaper or (b) press from which security demand has been demanded	Amount of security and date of demand	Whether English or vernacular in case of newspaper	Whether security was deposited or newspaper ceased publication and press closed down in view of demand of security	Whether security was forfeited or refunded. In case of forfeiture whether action was taken under the Act as passed in 1931 or by virtue of additional powers	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	(a) Janata	Rs.-2,000 on or before 17th May, 1940	Vernacular	Not yet known	—	The newspaper published objectionable article of the nature described in clause (bb) of sub-section (1) of

section 4 the of
Indian Press
(Emergency
Powers) Act
XXIII of 1931

(b) Jan Sahitya
Press

ditto

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peace between the two communities on Ramnawmi Day. The local Hindus did not agree to take out the Mahabiri Jhanda procession without akharas and weapons and the Sub-divisional Officer apprehending trouble issued orders under section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Action under section 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure was also taken and 38 of the leading mischief-makers of both communities were arrested. On the 17th, there was some minor disturbance at Sheikhpura in the same district. At Lalmati in the district of the Santal Parganas the police party on duty at the Ramnawmi procession was attacked by the Muhammadans. The Deputy Commissioner reports that there was undoubtedly a preconcerted plan on the part of the Muhammadans to cause trouble. He also feels that the Hindus are to blame for taking out the procession with music contrary to custom. Reports have been received of communal riots in the Madhubani subdivision on the occasion of the Jarsital festival and in Bettiah over the conversion of a married Muhammadan woman who was in love with a Kandu and wanted to marry him. Communal trouble is also reported from Barh (Patna) over the singing of Bande Mataram in school and the burying of a dead body in the way leading to the house of a Hindu pleader.

The Provincial Hindu Mahasabha meeting held at Ranchi passed a resolution condemning the Pakistan idea besides the usual resolutions. Some of the speeches and slogans indulged in were provocative and are, therefore, naturally held to be partly responsible for the disturbances which occurred in Ranchi three or four days later.

About the same time Patna witnessed a meeting of the All-India Kshatriya Mahasabha which also declaimed against the Pakistan scheme and in many ways expressed itself to be in agreement with the Hindu Mahasabha.

Y. A. Godbole,
Chief Secretary to Government.

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Thus, the final result, the partition of India, was a personal

triumph for Jinnah. By arousing deep emotions, by avoiding the details of his demand for Pakistan and by concentrating on a tirade against Hindu Raj, and Congress tyranny, Jinnah was able to sustain a large consensus in his community.⁶⁸ This created a new situation in the country and rendered the Congress more or less helpless to find any satisfactory or even tolerable solution of the communal problem.

Now, before we come to any conclusion of the elation and activities of the Indian National Congress towards the Muslims for the solution of the communal problem during last one and a half decades, we must have a glance at the roads through which the idea of the partition of India came to a reality.

The period of Congress rule in eight provinces gave the Muslim leaders probably the first strong weapon in their hands to attack the Congress. Moreover, World War II, as it dragged on its painful and tragic course, created in India a situation which proved a great menace to the possibility of the Hindu-Muslim unity. What should be India's attitude towards the war? It was the common topic of discussion among the political thinkers of the time. And "what should be Congress' attitude towards the war" was equally a hot question-mark among the politicians. Moreover, Congress was observed very critically at the time because Gandhi's first reaction to the announcement of the war alarmed the people. Gandhi was reported to have said: "My personal sympathies are with England and France."⁶⁹ On the other hand, Jawaharlal Nehru stated: "We have repeatedly stated that we are not out to bargain."⁷⁰ These statements did strike the common people. P.R. Das wrote a letter to T.B. Saprú giving his view about the role of India: Freedom must come to India, not as a gift from England but as a result of her tireless efforts to that end.⁷¹ For the communal support from the Muslim masses he suggested that the Congress should accept the standpoint of Muslim League for the time being and in every province the Ministry

68 B.R. Nanda, in C.H. Philips, ed., n. 4, p. 185.

69 *Sapru Papers*, Vol. I, National Archives, Calcutta.

70 *Ibid.*

71 *Ibid.*

should be a coalition ministry for the duration of war. Moreover, Das was keen enough to materialise his proposal and he put his proposals before the bonafide leaders as Gandhi, Jinnah and Savarkar. He suggested the following points for the communal harmony during the war time:

- (1) The Hindus and the Muslims should give themselves a communal holiday for the duration of the war and one year after.
- (2) The Congress and the Muslim League should withdraw their opposition to the war and after their services to defeat the forces of Hitlerism.
- (3) Coalition Ministries should be formed in all the Provinces in accordance with the suggestion.
- (4) To make the masses politically conscious.⁷²

Sapru gave his approval to these suggestions. As a matter of fact, the people outside Congress and League seemed much conscious of the communal situation.

With the outbreak of the war in September, 1939, Jinnah seemed to achieve a certain measure of success in his policy of building up the Muslim League, for he was, for the first time, invited by the Viceroy to discuss the Indian problems with him. It was because, as Jinnah concluded, the Muslim League had become a power to be reckoned with. Jinnah commented that it was a sharp blow to the Congress claim to speak on behalf of all India because the British Government was likely to recognise the Muslim League as an important party.⁷³

In the meantime Sir Stafford Cripps came to India with his proposals on behalf of the British Government. But the proposals proved unacceptable to the Congress. To the Congress this proposal was supporting Jinnah's demand for Pakistan. The working Committee of the Congress passed the following resolution:

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ C.H. Philips, n. 4, p. 32.

The Congress has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity and any break in that unity, especially in the modern world when people's minds inevitably think in terms of ever larger federations, would be injurious to all concerned and exceedingly painful to contemplate. Nevertheless, the committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will. While recognising this principle, the Committee feel that every effort should be made to create conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and co-operative national life. The acceptance of the principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which results in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercised on other substantial groups within the area.⁷⁴

This declaration aroused bitter attacks against the Congress from a section of the majority community which accused the Congress of becoming a party to the division and vivisection of India. The failure of Cripps to achieve any settlement left India in a situation which was full of dangerous possibilities. The Congress remained in the same condition from 1942 and 1945 when no proper initiative was taken for settling the communal problem. Still there were some efforts, such as Rajagopalachariar's formula for Pakistan and Desai-Liaquat Pact, which witnessed the Congress awareness for the communal settlement.

But it is viewed by the critics that Gandhi did not pay much attention towards these proposals. Had Gandhi approved any one of the above mentioned programmes, possibly the Congress would have reached a peaceful settlement.

Mahatma Gandhi on release from Jail in 1944 tried to talk with Jinnah with the Rajaji's formula as the basis. The one part of the Rajaji's formula which was approved by Gandhi is given below for reference:

(1) Subject to the terms set out below as regards the

constitution for free India, the Muslim League endorses the Indian demand for independence and will co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a provisional Interim Government for the transitional period.

- (2) After the termination of the war, a Commission shall be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the North-West and East of India, wherein the Muslim population is in an absolute majority. In the areas thus demarcated, a plebiscite of all the practicable franchise shall ultimately decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. If the majority decide in favour of forming a sovereign state separate from Hindustan, such decision will be given effect to without prejudice to the right of the border districts to choose to join either state.
- (3) It will be open to all parties to advocate their points of view before the plebiscite is held.
- (4) In the event of separation, mutual agreement shall be entered into for safeguarding defence and commerce and communications and for other essential purposes.
- (5) Any transfer of population shall only be on an absolutely voluntary basis.
- (6) These terms shall be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the governance of India.⁷⁵

Gandhi in his talks with Jinnah totally declined his theory of two nations. Consequently no hopeful result came out. It was now clear to Congress leaders and to the public at large that Jinnah's three main demands were in fact the recognition of the "two nations" theory as a condition precedent to the discussion of the details of any possible settlement; the inclusion, almost in their entirety, of six existing provinces within the proposed state of Pakistan; and the creation of two completely independent sovereign states with no connection between them except probably by treaty. Again the Hindu-Muslim

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

problem came in a controversy at the time of Simla Conference in June and July 1945. Among the terms of settlement of the political and communal problems that Wavel, the Viceroy, proposed, was the formation of the Central Executive Council which would represent the main communities and would include equal proportion of caste Hindus and Muslims. The Congress, as a matter of principle, opposed any such communal representation but agreed to accept it as a temporary arrangement. The Muslim League, however, would not agree unless the entire Muslim quota consisted of Muslim Leaguers. The Conference therefore broke down. Simla Conference was followed by Cabinet mission.

In the meantime, the results of the elections held in the winter of 1945-46 conclusively proved that there were only two main parties in the field. The Muslim League, in comparison to the election result in 1937, had jumped over its victory. It captured 425 out of the available 441 Muslim seats in the provinces and won every single Muslim seat in the Centre. The Congress had a similar success in the non-Muslim constituencies. The cleavage between the two parties was deeper than ever. One had fought the elections on the basis of a united India, the other on the basis of a partitioned India.⁷⁶

Faced with this picture of "irreconcilables" the British government announced its decision to send the famous Cabinet Mission to India. This body, consisting of Lord Pethick Lawrence, the Secretary of State, Sir Stafford Cripps and A.V.D. Alexander, reached India on the 24th March, 1946 and finding its conversations with the India as unfruitful, published its own recommendations on the 16th May, 1946. Before they issued their statement, again one effort was made to bring the representatives of the Congress and the League to a mutual agreement. But as usual it failed. There were wide differences between the two. The League demanded :

- (i) two groups of provinces distinctly demarcated, one of the Muslims and another of Hindus.
- (ii) Parity of representation between the two groups on the

in no co-operative or constructive mood. The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly was scheduled for 9th December, 1946, but the League asked for its postponement so that discussion could be held on the vexed question of the grouping clause. The Congress interpreted this provision to mean that each province had the right to decide both as to its grouping and as to its own constitution. To overcome this impasse the British Government invited the Viceroy, Jinnah, Liaquat Ali, Nehru and Baldev Singh, to come to London to discuss the controversy. When these conversations of December, 1946 failed to produce an agreement, the British Government reaffirmed that the League's interpretation was the right one, viz. that the decision of the Assembly's sections on Provincial Constitutions and grouping should be taken by a simple majority vote of each section. But the Congress refused to accept this version and demanded that the League should either enter the Constituent Assembly on the Congress interpretation of the grouping clause or resign from the interim government. The League refused to quit the government and boycotted the Assembly and charged that the Congress had refused the official interpretation of the grouping clause. The Government in the meantime announced to withdraw from India by June, 1948. Wavell, the successor of Mountbatten watched the complications of Indian politics. He finally informed the Government that the Cabinet Mission plan was not enough to meet the emergency. He then chalked out new plan for India. Ultimately the Congress and the League accepted this and ultimately the power transferred to the two new Dominions on the 15th August, 1947.

Thus, the whole chapter is the witness to Jinnah's victory over the political situation. He successfully heaped all blames and scorn on all Congress leaders from Gandhi and Nehru onwards. According to one observer, "the patience and humility of Gandhi, the cold calculation of Rajagopalachari, the militant radicalism of Subhas Chandra Bose, the sedate realism of Abul Kalam Azad and the gentleness of Rajendra Prasad equally failed to work on the League leader."⁸²

Looking from the analytical angle, some points can be obser-

⁸² B. R. Nanda, in C. H. Philips, ed., n. 4, p. 187.

ved at last.

First, that Jinnah from 1933 onwards seemed to be very adamant to get his separate existence in the name of Muslim community.

Jinnah, who was never before a religionist exploited the Muslim sentiments in the name of Islam and Allah. Jinnah, in his way, was bold enough to handle the religion for his political gain and he got a bright success.

But this never means that Jinnah all alone could achieve a separate Muslim land and separate Muslim existence in India. This is a remarkable question: Why could Jinnah get full support of the Muslims and why couldn't the Congress besides all its efforts for the mass contact?

The answer rests in the inward and outward character of the Congress' organisation. It was very unfortunate for the Congress that it could never show the clear picture of its character to the public which the Muslim League could very much prove. Muslim League was a Muslim organisation and Hindu Mahasabha stood for Hindus. Then, what did the Congress stand for? The general mass could not get its satisfactory answer. Congress called itself a national and secular body while Gandhi raised a slogan of "Rama". Rama stood for Hindu God and this was exploited by the Muslim leaders that Gandhi was a strict Hindu in guise of a nationalist leader. In all such circumstances the Muslim masses found their welfare in joining the Muslim League—a purely and narrowly organised Muslim body. This automatically strengthened the cause of Jinnah.

Secondly, the Muslim leaders were rarely concerned with the national causes. Moreover, they were guided by the fear complex that the independence without partition would bring Hindu Raj to India and would crush the Muslim community. Naturally they longed for the Muslim demands.

Nevertheless there were notable weaknesses in the Congress organisation. The Congress was internally divided into two groups—one led by Gandhi and the other led by Subhas. Therefore, much percentage of their energy was exhausted in fighting with each other. Gandhi, called as the dictator of the Congress, never succeeded in getting mutual settlement with Subhas. Moreover, the Congress at many occasions showed confusion

in its politics. Even during the time of its Ministry, it showed its weaknesses and gave chance for its bitter criticism. The difficulty with the Congress was that neither it could fully rule nor could it fully spare. Its policy of appeasement to the Muslim leaders, its attitude of negligence towards Hindu Mahasabha, its great principles of nationality, freedom and equality, all were later on proved as hyperbolic.

The Congress, day by day, became more confusing in its actions, more vague in its policies, while the Muslim League became more and more organised, more firm, more united and more decisive.

The Partition of India 1942-47

Sir Stafford Cripps arrived at Delhi on the 23rd March, 1942. He put the following proposals before the Indian leaders:

1. In order to achieve 'the earliest possible realisation of self-government in India', the step should be taken to create a new Indian Union which will have the full status of a Dominion.
2. Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities, a Constitution-making body shall be set up. Unless the leaders of the principal communities shall have previously agreed on some other method, this body shall be elected under the system of proportional representation, by an electoral college consisting of the members of the lower houses of all the provincial legislatures for which new elections would have been held. The Indian States will be invited to appoint representatives—the proportion between British Indian and States' representatives to correspond with the proportion between their total populations.
3. The British Government 'undertake to accept and implement forthwith the Constitution so framed'¹ on two condi-

¹ R.C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III (Calcutta 1961) p. 621.

tions. First, any province or provinces which are not prepared to accept the new Constitution will be entitled to frame by a similar process a Constitution of their own, giving them 'the same full status as the Indian Union'.²

4. The second condition is the signing of a treaty to be negotiated between the British Government and the Constitution-making body to cover all matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands, particularly the protection of racial and religious minorities in accordance with the British Government's past undertakings.
5. Until the new Constitution can be framed, the British Government must retain control of the defence of India 'as part of their world war-effort, but the task of organising to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India in co-operation with the peoples of India'. Thus, the British Government invited the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the commonwealth and of the United Nations.

Clearly, the Cripps proposals did not appeal to the Congress as these were not the solution of the Indian problem rather they had clear indication to cut India into two pieces. Curiously enough, the proposals which alienated the rest of India failed to satisfy even the Muslims whom they intended to conciliate. The resolution of the Working Committee of the Muslim League announced:

"The Moslems demand a definite pronouncement in favour of partition. Though 'Pakistan is recognised by implication' in the Draft Declaration, its primary object is to create one Indian Union 'the creation of more than one Union being relegated only to the realm of remote possibility'. Nor in any case can the Moslems participate in a Constitution-

making body which is not elected by separate electorates and in which decisions—the Committee assumes—are to be taken by a bare majority.”³

Thus the scheme was not acceptable because Pakistan was not conceded unequivocally and the right of Muslim self-determination was denied.⁴

Anti-India Movement—After a hot controversy among the Congress leaders in AICC Working Committee on 14th July, the Working Committee passed a long resolution, generally referred to as the ‘Quit India’ resolution. It declared the demand that “British rule in India must end immediately” and reiterated the view that the freedom of India was “necessary not only in the interest of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism and the aggression of one nation over another....”⁵

It further resolved—“In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British Rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied Powers in their prosecution of the war, or in any way to encourage aggression on India or increase pressure on China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group...” The Congress would plead with the British power to accept the very reasonable and just proposal herein made...Should, however, this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs...The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilize all the non-violent strength it might have gathered since 1920⁶.

Muslim leaders of Muslim League took the resolution against the welfare of the Muslims. Nevertheless, they treated it as a warning to the British Government and also to the Muslim population. Commenting on the Congress Working Committee resolutions, Dr. Sayyid Abdul Latif said: “Going into the wilderness as the Congress resolution threatens to do, will do no good

3 *Ibid.*, p. 623.

4 Rajendra Prasad, “*India Divided*” (Bombay-1947) p. 343.

5 R.C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III (Calcutta 1963), p. 623.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 641.

to the Congress. It will have grave repercussions all over the country..."⁷ He further clarifies his view—"If Mr. Gandhi and the Congress really want independence for India and not a Congress Raj now and after the war, they must seize the opportunity for an honourable settlement with the Muslims which Mr. Jinnah offered...If they are wise, they will establish immediate contact with the Muslim League and come to some settlement."⁸

The statement is remarkable from the Congress point of view—"Mr. Jinnah has now come out in his true colours; no scheme of government will satisfy him even for the period of the war unless it is in furtherance of the disruption of India..."⁹

Mahatma Gandhi wrote a letter to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru on 25th Jan., 1941..."My impression is that he (Mr. Jinnah) does not want a settlement till he has so consolidated the position of the League that he can dictate his terms to all parties concerned including the rulers."¹⁰

Anyway, the Quit India movement ended in failure. As could be easily anticipated, the Muslims generally kept themselves aloof from the movement. Moreover as a reaction to it, at the session of the All India Muslim League held in Karachi in December, 1943, a new proposal was put by the Muslim leaders as 'Divide and quit' and the league planned to organise Muslims all over India to prepare for the struggle for getting the 'Pakistan'.

While Cripps was busy with the negotiations with the Congress leaders in India, Subhash Chandra Bose was engaged in negotiations of a different kind with Germany and Italy to shape India's future destiny. This is one of the most important episodes of the Freedom Movement in India that Subhash Chandra Bose formed the Azad Hind Fauz or the Indian National Army (INA). Although the space does not permit us to go in detail about the formation and achievement of INA, it should be noted here that Subhash Chandra Bose was the most striking figure

7 Nawab N.Y. Jung ed. *The Pakistan Issue* (Lahore-1943) p. 133.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Mehta and Patwardhan, *The Communal Triangle in India*. (Allahabad-1942), p. 210.

10 *Ibid.*

of the Congress and after being twice elected President of the Indian National Congress, on account of his fundamental differences with Gandhi, he was forced to quit the Congress and form a new party known as the Forward Bloc. But he on his own tried his best to harmonize the communal tension by having correspondence with Jinnah. But the solution was not possible.

The year 1944 has a great importance in the history of the communal problem of India. It was perhaps the last effort of Mahatma Gandhi on behalf of the Congress to have talks with Jinnah for a mutual understanding with Muslim leaders. During his talks with Jinnah in 1944, Gandhi further spelled out the terms of the Congress offer. Gandhi wrote to Jinnah on September 24, 1944 :

"I proceed on the assumption that India is not to be regarded as two or more nations but as one family consisting of many members of whom the Muslims living in the north-west zones i.e. Baluchistan, Sindh, the North-West Frontier Province and that part of Punjab where they are in absolute majority over all the other elements, and in parts of Bengal and Assam where they are in absolute majority, desire to live in separation from the rest of India."¹¹ He further described the ground on which he differed from Jinnah's view of separate nation as follows :

(a) The areas should be demarcated by a commission approved by the Congress and the League. The wishes of the inhabitants of the areas demarcated should be ascertained through the votes.

(b) If the vote is in favour of separation, it shall be agreed that these areas shall form a separate state as soon as possible after India is free from foreign domination and can, therefore, be constituted into two sovereign independent states.¹²

Jinnah rejected Gandhi's proposals as being fundamentally opposed to the 'Lahore Resolution' and insisted that the Muslims of India should be recognised as a nation. Thus the Gandhi-Jinnah talks and correspondence failed with no result but one repercussion that the wishes of the nationalists about Hindu-Muslim rapprochement ended.

11 C.H. Phillips ed. *The Partition of India* (London-1970) pp. 214-15.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 215.

Before the Cabinet Mission arrived in March, 1946, there were two forces at work, one led by the Indian National Congress trying for the transfer of power from British hands, and the other, represented by the Muslim League, seeking nothing less than the Partition of India along religious lines. Therefore, Cabinet Mission had its task to reconcile the two rival standpoints. The League wanted common subjects like defence and foreign affairs, to be dealt with by treaty arrangements. The Congress wanted a federal centre for administering them. Cabinet Mission told Jinnah to choose between sovereignty and a small area or on the basis of a Union and a larger area for Pakistan.¹³

But curiously enough, this plan was rejected by both the parties.

The Cabinet Mission issued a statement on May 25, 1946, dealing with the criticisms made by both sides. On the question of grouping which was to assume such critical significance later, the Mission said... 'The reasons for the grouping of the provinces are well known and this is an essential feature of the scheme and can only be modified by agreement between the parties.'¹⁴

The Council of the All India Muslim League accepted the Mission's plan on June 6th. Soon negotiations began for the formation of an interim government and these proceeded simultaneously with clarifications of the long term plan by the Cabinet Mission to the Congress leaders. Although the Congress made some objection to the grouping formula of the Cabinet Mission, yet it accepted the proposal with certain conditions.

The Cabinet Mission having secured the League's acceptance was naturally anxious to secure the acceptance of the Congress as well.

But naturally enough, Jinnah had grievance that Congress' acceptance was conditional and League withdrew its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals because of an outburst by Nehru.¹⁵ At last the Constituent Assembly and interim government formed by the Cabinet Mission was converted into battle-

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

field by the parties. Lord Wavell, the then Viceroy, was so much disgusted with the political situation in India that he proposed to the government either to re-establish the British authority in India with force or to quit immediately. Consequently, Lord Wavell was recalled in Feb., 1947.

Lord Mountbatten succeeded him in February, 1947. He faced the situation boldly and tried to solve the problems on practical lines. On February 20, 1947 the British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee had announced His Majesty's Government's definite intention to take the necessary steps to effect the transfer of power into responsible Indian hands not later than June, 1948. He also clearly hinted the possibility of partition of India. The Congress Working Committee passed a resolution welcoming Attlee's announcement. But the first Partition Plan made by the staff of Lord Mountbatten in May, 1947 was so wrong-headed that Nehru annoyingly rejected it. It had provided for the transfer of power to the provinces or to such confederations of provinces as the latter might decide to form. As Nehru rightly pointed out to Mountbatten, the Plan 'would encourage disruptive tendencies everywhere and chaos and weakness'.¹⁶ In the framing of the Second Plan which is well known as Mountbatten Plan, Mr. V.P. Menon¹⁷ is told to have played a crucial role. It was accepted by all the parties concerned and finally became the basis of the Indian Independence Act 1947.

It provided for the transfer to power of India and Pakistan on the basis of dominion status, without disturbing constitutional continuity. Some authors¹⁸ maintain that this arrangement supported the claim of Congress leaders that the Union of India was the rightful successor to the British Raj and that Pakistan was merely the secession of a few provinces and part of provinces from British India. While the other historian claims that the final result, the partition of India, was a personal triumph for Jinnah...By keeping his cards close to his chest, he was able to keep his following in good order."¹⁹

16 *IBL*, p. 219.

17 A distinguished Indian civil servant.

18 *Ibid.*, article by S.R. Mehrotra, p. 220.

19 *IBL*, article by B.R. Nanda, p. 185.

Thus the Partition took place with the Independence of India. It is still difficult to analyse and judge the responsible factors of this episode. It should always be noted that "the patience and humility of Gandhi, the cool calculation of Rajgopalachari, the militant radicalism of Subhash Chandra Bose, the sedate realism of Abul Kalam Azad and gentleness of Rajendra Prasad."²⁰ all failed to bring Jinnah for the reconciliation. Therefore after viewing all the facts the Partition seemed to be the only remedy of the disease—the communal problem.

Conclusion

Finally the power was transferred to the two new Dominions on the 15th August, 1947. S.R. Mehrotra opines :

In agreeing to the partition of India, Congress leaders chose the lesser evil. Partition was bad, but the alternatives to Partition in 1947 were worse. Continued slavery, civil war, chaos and the pragmatic sanction of India...these were the only alternatives to Partition in 1947.¹

Regarding the responsible factors of the partition, one group of the critics hold that the British rule was a potent factor in preventing any reasonable communal settlement. The statements of Leopold Amery and Lord Linlithgow on the communal and political problems in India, provided a convincing proof. Throughout the period of the war both the Secretary of State and the Viceroy kept on saying that while the British Government was very anxious to meet India's demand for freedom it could not do so unless the Congress, the Muslim League, the Princes and the scheduled castes etc. came to an agreement among themselves. This statement made it simply obvious that this was a dishonest excuse for preventing any political settle-

¹ S.R. Mehrotra, "The Congress and Partition" in C.H. Philips, *The Partition of India* (London, 1970), p. 220.

ment and holding on to India as long as they could.² On the question of partition of the country into two independent states, Russians observed thus : "British ruling circles still wanted to be able to interfere in India's political life, and so before granting India, Dominion status, partitioned their former colony on communal lines into two independent states."³ Edward Thompson, an eminent English personality admits that "in former times we frankly practised the 'divide and rule' method in India."⁴ Rajendra Prasad expressed more than once that it was British Government which made the communal settlement impossible.⁵ Gandhi himself gave his opinion in distress :

Britain has hitherto held power...by playing the minorities against the so-called majority and has thus made an agreed solution among the component parts well nigh impossible... so long as Britain considers her mission to bear this burden, so long will she continue to feel the necessity of holding India as dependency.⁶

J.B. Kripalani, the then Secretary of the All India Congress Committee, addressed some 4,000 students on 27th January, 1941 and claimed that "since India was a slave country the fundamental conditions for a happy life were non-existent and for the same reasons Hindu-Muslim unity was impossible."⁷ Likewise a number of other prominent personalities hold the British Government as the responsible factor to the division of India.

Some other critics claim that the partition came because of the shortcomings of the Congress. Some of the members of

2 Sadiq Ali, *Congress and the Minorities* (Allahabad, 1947), p. 20.

3 V.V. Balabushevich and A.M. Dyakov, *A Contemporary History of India* (New Delhi, 1964) (trans. from Russian publication, Moscow, 1959), p. 445.

4 Edward Thompson, *Enlist India for Freedom* (London, 1940), p. 51.

5 Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided* (Bombay, 1947).

6 Gwyer and Appadorai, *Speeches and Documents on Indian Constitution* (Bombay, 1957), vol. 2, pp. 488-90.

7 Confidential Reports, File 3/16/41. Pol., Government of India, National Archives, New Delhi.

the Congress like Nehru and Patel were in a hurry. The power craze compelled them to think of partition. It is said that Nehru irritated Jinnah and provoked him to have his parallel existence. Jinnah while inaugurating the Muslim League election campaign in 1937 commented :

Mr. Nehru is reported to have said that there are only two parties in India—the Government and the Congress—and others must line up. I refuse to line up with the Congress. I refuse to accept this proposition. There is a third party in this country and this is Muslim India.⁸

Moreover, many of the observers including Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, regarded Gandhi's policy of commission and omission as the strong factor of the partition. Maulana Azad has written in his autobiography : "When I met Gandhi again, I received the greatest shock in my life...he was still not openly in favour of partition but he no longer spoke so vehemently against it."⁹ He, moreover, indicated that due to unnecessary favour of Mahatma Gandhi all matters had been given to Nehru, Patel and others who were straining at the back to get into the seat of power. On the other hand, ironically enough, while Azad regarded Nehru, Patel etc. responsible for partition, Jinnah held Azad the hurdle on the way of communal rapprochement. He wrote to Gandhi that he (Gandhi) unreasonably okayed Azad's suggestions. Outwardly Gandhi seemed to dictate the Congress but internally he remained ineffective to the activities of the Congress members. During the first decade of his leadership in India he and the Congress machinery were so closely identified as to present a virtually united front but as time went on the Gandhian organisation became increasingly differentiated from the Congress, and in a sense a parallel system to a parallel system.¹⁰ Moreover, as Louis Fischer opines, the "tremendous power was at his command but it often

⁸ Z.H. Zaidi, "Aspects of the Developments of Muslim League", in C.H. Philips, n. 1, p. 225.

⁹ Abul Kalam Azad, *India Was Freedom* (New Delhi, 1959), p. 15

¹⁰ M.K. Gandhi, *Unity of India* (Ahmedabad, 1949), pp. 204-17.

ment and holding on to India as long as they could.² On the question of partition of the country into two independent states, Russians observed thus : "British ruling circles still wanted to be able to interfere in India's political life, and so before granting India, Dominion status, partitioned their former colony on communal lines into two independent states."³ Edward Thompson, an eminent English personality admits that "in former times we frankly practised the 'divide and rule' method in India."⁴ Rajendra Prasad expressed more than once that it was British Government which made the communal settlement impossible.⁵ Gandhi himself gave his opinion in distress :

Britain has hitherto held power...by playing the minorities against the so-called majority and has thus made an agreed solution among the component parts well nigh impossible...so long as Britain considers her mission to bear this burden, so long will she continue to feel the necessity of holding India as dependency.⁶

J.B. Kripalani, the then Secretary of the All India Congress Committee, addressed some 4,000 students on 27th January, 1941 and claimed that "since India was a slave country the fundamental conditions for a happy life were non-existent and for the same reasons Hindu-Muslim unity was impossible."⁷ Likewise a number of other prominent personalities hold the British Government as the responsible factor to the division of India.

Some other critics claim that the partition came because of the shortcomings of the Congress. Some of the members of

2 Sadiq Ali, *Congress and the Minorities* (Allahabad, 1947), p. 20.

3 V.V. Balabushevich and A.M. Dyakov, *A Contemporary History of India* (New Delhi, 1964) (trans. from Russian publication, Moscow, 1959), p. 445.

4 Edward Thompson, *Enlist India for Freedom* (London, 1940), p. 51.

5 Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided* (Bombay, 1947).

6 Gwyer and Appadorai, *Speeches and Documents on Indian Constitution* (Bombay, 1957), vol. 2, pp. 488-90.

7 Confidential Reports, File 3/16/41, Pol., Government of India, National Archives, New Delhi.

the Congress like Nehru and Patel were in a hurry. The power craze compelled them to think of partition. It is said that Nehru irritated Jinnah and provoked him to have his parallel existence. Jinnah while inaugurating the Muslim League election campaign in 1937 commented :

Mr. Nehru is reported to have said that there are only two parties in India—the Government and the Congress—and others must line up. I refuse to line up with the Congress. I refuse to accept this proposition. There is a third party in this country and this is Muslim India.⁸

Moreover, many of the observers including Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, regarded Gandhi's policy of commission and omission as the strong factor of the partition. Maulana Azad has written in his autobiography : "When I met Gandhi again, I received the greatest shock in my life...he was still not openly in favour of partition but he no longer spoke so vehemently against it."⁹ He, moreover, indicated that due to unnecessary favour of Mahatma Gandhi all matters had been given to Nehru, Patel and others who were straining at the back to get into the seat of power. On the other hand, ironically enough, while Azad regarded Nehru, Patel etc. responsible for partition, Jinnah held Azad the hurdle on the way of communal rapprochement. He wrote to Gandhi that he (Gandhi) unreasonably okayed Azad's suggestions. Outwardly Gandhi seemed to dictate the Congress but internally he remained ineffective to the activities of the Congress members. During the first decade of his leadership in India he and the Congress machinery were so closely identified as to present a virtually united front but as time went on the Gandhian organisation became increasingly differentiated from the Congress, and in a sense a parallel system to a parallel system.¹⁰ Moreover, as Louis Fischer opines, the "tremendous power was at his command but it often

⁸ Z.H. Zaidi, "Aspects of the Development of Muslim League", in C.H. Philips, n. 1, p. 225.

⁹ Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (New Delhi, 1959), p. 15

¹⁰ M.K. Gandhi, *Unity of India* (Ahmedabad, 1949), pp. 204-17.

remained unused."¹¹

No doubt Gandhi had been cut to a supremely pathetic figure and remained a helpless spectator of the great tragedy, but he had striven hard to achieve certain objective, he had dreamt for, till the last. In his desperate mood all that he could do was to rush from one place to another—Noakhali, Patna, Calcutta etc. Nirmal Kumar Bose more than once heard Gandhi muttering to himself in his utter helplessness "kya karun ? kya karun ? (what should I do ?)."¹² It is sad that Gandhi with his innermost desires and with power, could not make India unified. But these criticisms of Gandhi are not all. It was not less tragic that the Congress members were not unified internally.

Some critics believe that psychological fear of the Muslims caused the partition. Rajagopalachari sensed the fact as early as 1932.¹³ The psychological basis of Muslim communalism was imaginary fear of injustice, oppression and tyranny of the *Hindu majority*.¹⁴

American diplomats give a balanced and dispassionate view that the creation of Pakistan was as much the result of political ineptitude by leaders of the Indian National Congress as of agitation by the Muslim League.¹⁵ Hodson says : "Every Congress error was irreversibly exploited by Mr. Jinnah...nor did the Congress need more to recognise its own shortcomings."¹⁶

Another group of people believes that psychological fear of the Muslims caused the partition. Whatever it may be it is quite clear that the partition was no surprising event. It was a well known outcome of the gradual development of the communal tension in India.

Besides, it is equally well proved that the idea of "Pakistan" or a separate homeland for the Indian Muslims had been float-

11 Richard Looney, *The Speaking Tree* (London, 1971), p. 375.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 376.

13 C. Rajagopalachari and Kumarappa, *Nation's Voice* (Ahmedabad, 1932), p. 278.

14 *Ibid.*

15 *Patriot* (New Delhi), 2 May 1972, p. 3.

16 H.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide* (London/New York, 1971), p. 526.

ing in the imagination of many educated Muslims for quite a long time. It was born of the feeling entertained and sedulously propagated by certain Muslim intellectuals that their community formed a distinct cultural and political entity, different from the other Indian communities, especially the Hindus. Therefore, the demand of "Pakistan" was not sudden and new. The observers have traced the idea of Pakistan back to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in the nineteenth century, to Shah Waliullah and Shah Abdul Aziz in the eighteenth century, and even to Mohammad-bin-Qasim, the first Muslim invader of India early in the eighth century. Moreover, the year 1909 created the two-nation theory and the determination not to submit to Hindu majority and instead to secure a homeland for themselves, and to the lapse on the part of the Hindu and Congress leaders.

Henceforth, Muslim separatism in India had a long history, but it was not the only separatism that afflicted India. It had created many complications in the past and it could create many more in the future. It might have even led to a civil war. But Muslim separatism in itself could not have led to Pakistan unless there were Muslim majority regions in India which could be easily separated from the rest of India. The Muslim solution of the Indian political and communal problem was put forward publicly—probably for the first time—by Maulana Hasrat Mohani in his presidential address to the Muslim League session held at Ahmedabad towards the end of December 1921.¹⁷ The Indian Muslims, it was urged, were a "nation" by themselves, totally different from the other "nations" in India.¹⁸

As time passed, this feeling of two-nation theory was deepened. The resolution of 1940 was the climax. By then it became crystal clear to the people and the Congress that any effort for the unity of the country would be now fruitless. Even Gandhi, who was dead against the division of India, realized it in 1940 :

The partition proposal has altered the face of the Hindu-Muslim problem. I have called it an untruth. There can be no compromise with it. At the same time I have said

17 S.R. Mehrotra, *India and the Commonwealth* (London, 1963), pp. 197-8.
18 Guyer and Appabalar, *ibid.* 6, p. 437.

that, if the eight crores of Muslims desire it, no power on earth can prevent it, notwithstanding opposition, violent or non-violent. It cannot come by honourable compromise.¹⁹

Nehru also viewed the same : "The Pakistan resolution" as it came to be known, gave a new twist to the communal problem... and there is no question of settlement or negotiations now."²⁰

On another occasion Nehru was reported to have remarked :

Many knots of the Hindu-Muslim problem had been merged into one knot, which could not be unravelled by ordinary methods, but would need an operation...he would say one thing very frankly that he had begun to consider them (Muslim League) and people like himself, as separate nations.²¹

Therefore, either from the Muslim League's side, or from the Congress, the idea of division of India had been cleared up, or planned up in the year 1940, the process only took six or seven years' time. While the Muslim League examined every proposal from its own point of view, namely, whether or not it had led directly and speedily to the creation of Pakistan, the Congress examined the same proposal from its own point of view, namely, whether or not it ensured the freedom and the maximum possible unity of India.

Ambedkar criticizes the Congress policy as a policy of tolerance and appeasement. He maintains that "because they (the Congress) believe that they cannot reach their cherished goal of independence unless the Muslims back their demand." He further enquires whether the Congress way was the right way. It seems to him that "the Congress had failed to realize two things. The first thing which the Congress failed to realize is that there is difference between appeasement and settlement. The second thing the Congress failed to realize is that the policy of concession has increased Muslim aggressiveness and what is

19 *The Statesman* (Calcutta), 5 May 1940.

20 S.R. Mehrotra, n. 1, p. 166.

21 *The Leader* (Allahabad), 16 April 1940.

22 B.R. Ambedkar, *Thoughts of Partition* (Bombay, 1946), p. 260.

worse, Muslims interpret these concessions as a sign of defeatism on the part of the Hindus and the absence of the will to resist.²³ Therefore, Ambedkar seeks the remedy in settlement. He regarded the partition as the necessity of the day.²⁴ He further gives reason in support of his say. He maintains that there must be Pakistan because a good part of the Muslim population of India happened to be concentrated in certain defined areas which can/could be easily severed from the rest of India, because there was communal antagonism between the Hindus and the Muslims as the Muslims have lost faith in the Congress majority, because the Muslims are a nation, and because of their fear that the Swaraj would be a Hindu Raj.²⁵

Though all the factors put by Ambedkar do not seem to be very logical or reasonable causes, yet these are undoubtedly behind the background of the partition. The causes might or might not be reasonable, it is remarkable that the Muslim leaders were thinking on the same lines. Indeed, Mehrotra says that the Muslim leaders played the prominent role in the drama of partition.²⁶

It is frequently said that without Jinnah there would have been no Pakistan.²⁷ He himself off and on remarked that it was he who, with the help of his secretary and his typewriter, won Pakistan for the Muslims. No doubt he played the major and positive part in the crucial years from 1930 to 1947.

But after all, we should keep in mind that his personality and political ability did not alone cause this event. There were drifting situations which brought Jinnah to the limelight all of a sudden. Sayeed suggests that the Muslims needed a leader, Jinnah needed an instrument with which he was to achieve his aims, and to restore his self-confidence.²⁸ Lord Mountbatten decries his political ability: "Until I had met him I would not have thought it possible that a man with such a

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Ibid.*

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 343-57.

26 C.H. Philips, n. 1, p. 32.

27 *Ibid.*

28 *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

complete lack of administrative knowledge or sense of responsibility could achieve or hold down such a powerful position."²⁹

George D. Marrell told that "the present unhappy situation is as much a result of Congress leaders' political ineptitude and lack of vision as of Mr. Jinnah's intransigence."³⁰

Therefore, we should look more to changes in circumstances and the effects of these changes on Jinnah's political outlook and political calculations.

Going through the background of the relation between the Indian National Congress and the Muslims from 1928 to 1947, one important question arises to the mind: "Whether the relation could be softened or whether the partition could be avoided." The relation, as we have seen its history, could not be softened because there was fundamental difference in policy and aims between the Congress and the Muslim League which later on became the sole representative party of the Muslim community. The wall between Gandhi and Jinnah was very much apparent. To Jinnah:

By all canons of international law, we are a nation, we are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of value and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions.³¹

Gandhi, on the other hand, said: "I find no parallel in history for a body of converts and their descendants claiming to be a nation apart from the parent stock."³²

Therefore, there was no room for any compromise. Gandhi wanted to use the cement of nationalism to make it one; Jinnah wanted to use the dynamite of religion to make it two. Ironically enough, the irreligious Jinnah wished to build a religious state. Gandhi wholly religious wanted a secular state.³³

²⁹ H.V. Hodson, n. 16, p. 231.

³⁰ *Patriot* (New Delhi), 2 May 1972.

³¹ Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* (London, 1951), pp. 431-2.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

Even now it is difficult to assess the decisive turning point towards the parting away of Muslims from the Congress. Some see the Nehru Report (1928) as the parting of the ways, others point to the failure to form coalition ministries in the United Provinces and Bombay in 1937, while some critics assert that the period of Congress rule from 1937 to 1939 was more significant to this context. It is clear by all means that from 1928 onwards the relations between the Muslim leaders and the Congress started deteriorating. Although by its all efforts at its disposal Congress showed its full capacity of administration during its ministry in 1937, it, no doubt, started maintaining law and order and gave an impression of a safe political future of India in its control. But against its all achievements and potentials by 1939 the Muslim League under the leadership of Jinnah challenged its capacity and jumped to the height of communal power. This was a sheer sign of defeat of the Congress' policy. It is said that the leaders of the Indian National Congress in the period between the outbreak of war in 1939 and the partition of 1947 showed lack of realism, foresightedness and will of power. Most significant weakness in this period was the internal gulf between Gandhi and his other colleagues. Moreover, no clear line of Congress policy was maintained, not even it showed the firmness of its policy. The political situation up to 1940 became so critical that on the one hand the communal problem raised high, and on the other, Gandhi's impractical ideologies confused the stand of the Congress. For example, when Lahore resolution in 1940 was declared, Gandhi wrote:

Unless the rest of India wishes to engage in internal fraticide, the other will have to submit to the Moslem dictation, if the Moslem will resort to it. I knew of no non-violent method of compelling the obedience of eight crores of Moslems to the will of the rest of India, however powerful a majority the rest may represent. The Moslems must have the same right of self-determination that the rest of India has. We are at present a joint family. Any member may claim a division.³⁴

At the same time, Jawaharlal Nehru gave his response to the Lahore resolution stating that:

If people wanted such things as suggested by the Muslim League at Lahore then one thing was clear. They and people like him could not live together in India. He would be prepared to face all the consequences of it, but he would not be prepared to live with such people.³⁵

These announcements left drastic effects on Congress power. It meant to the people that Congress neither had any grip on Muslim League and nor any power to challenge or object to the League's demand. Consequently, the separatist tendency got encouragement by such statements. Moreover, according to C.H. Philips, the Congress did two blunders in its decision during 1939.³⁶ The first was the withdrawal of all Congress Ministries from office in reaction to the decision of the British Viceroy, Linlithgow, in 1939, to declare war on behalf of India. The second was the half-hearted attempt in 1942 to force the embattled British to quit India. In relevance with the subject, we can also have a glance at the role of Linlithgow as Viceroy. Some critics hold that Linlithgow was a responsible factor to the partition of India. Amba Prasad observes that Linlithgow could have prevented partition.³⁷ Prasad proves by some valuable records that the political climate in India was not so unfavourable to a settlement during the months from September 1939 to March, 1940. He explains that:

The situation was such that a settlement was possible if the Viceroy was willing to act with statesmanship. But Linlithgow did not act with imaginative insight, not even when Mr. Zetland (Secretary of State) and Labour Party leaders were suggesting the need for a bold initiative. As the stalemate deepened after the resignation of the Congress Ministries in the provinces and the observance of the

³⁵ *Leader*, 15 April 1940.

³⁶ C.H. Philips n. 1, p. 25.

³⁷ *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 1 February 1973.

deliverance day by Jinnah, a new and bold initiative was required.³⁸

This initiative came from Sir Stafford Cripps, who proposed the idea of a constitution-making body representative of all parties and groups and princes and stipulated that if an agreed constitution were to emerge, Britain should agree to it and its relations with India could be regulated by a treaty. Amba Prasad holds that while Prime Minister Chamberlain expressed on 4th December, 1939 his readiness to consider the Cripps proposals, the Viceroy strongly opposed the whole scheme considering it "ill advised". After Lord Linlithgow's meeting with Gandhi and Jinnah in early 1940 "when Gandhi was more conciliatory and Jinnah getting more adamant",³⁹ the Viceroy conveyed to the Secretary of State, Jinnah's threat that "if Congress Ministers did return to office under existing conditions, there would be a civil war in India".⁴⁰ The Viceroy is reported to have sent his advice to London "to wait and to watch", as he hoped that the existing discord between the communities could strengthen Britain's control in India for many years. Prasad concludes that "as a matter of fact until Amery took a new initiative in June-July 1940, Lord Linlithgow's policy was based on four guidelines: refrain from action, wait upon events, avoid running after the Congress, and lie back."⁴¹ C.H. Phillips has tried to defend Linlithgow's stand and maintained that he was less responsible for all these mishaps. It is a fact that besides his all ill-advised policies, Linlithgow or any person like him cannot be regarded the only factor of the communal disharmony and demand for Pakistan, nor even Jinnah can be credited with having such great capacity of getting a Muslim land, nor Gandhi should be blamed for these historic turns. Very boldly this fact should be accepted by all schools of the historians that the partition of India was inevitable. The Indian National Congress undoubtedly played a very important role in the partition

38 *Ibid.*

39 *Ibid.*

40 *Ibid.*

41 *Ibid.*

Programme, but it does not mean that it had any intention to cut the nation into two pieces. Due to some unfavourable situations the gulf between the Congress and the Muslim League widened during the time of freedom struggle movement. Congress, then, had no way out but to accept the Partition Plan because the British Government had decided to quit India only after making a new nation namely 'Pakistan'.

Some historians believe in the 'ifs and buts' of Indian history. For example, it is often suggested that if the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 had been allowed to be implemented, the unity of India would have been preserved. But this is not fully justified argument. We forget here that by that time the Muslim League headed by Jinnah had become adamant to get 'Pakistan'. The League had accepted the Mission Plan with its own interpretation of grouping and only as a stepping stone to full, complete and sovereign Pakistan.⁴²

The Mountbatten Plan came and was formulated in a dramatic way. Before publicly announcing it, Mountbatten gave copies of the Plan to Indian leaders for study and remarks. Jinnah did not give any remark clearly on it. Mountbatten had then to warn him that 'if that is your attitude, then the leaders of the Congress Party and Sikhs will refuse final acceptance at the meeting in the morning; chaos will follow, and you will lose your Pakistan; probably for good'.⁴³ At last Jinnah accepted the Plan and the drama ended.

Mr. Ram Gopal remarkably states: "Islam is undoubtedly different from Hinduism, but it was not religion which divided Hindus and Muslims politically. Islam was not the cause but was employed as an excuse by persons who themselves were victims of accidents of history."⁴⁴

In my opinion there were many causes for growing differences between the Congress and the Muslim League, but one of the most striking causes of it was the poor economic background of the Muslim masses. Congress, in fact, failed to assure the Muslim

42 S. R. Mehrotra, *Towards India's freedom and partition*, (Delhi-1979) p. 230.

43 Ram Gopal, *Indian Muslims* (Bombay-1959) p. 325.

44 *Ibid.*, p. Introduction-vii.

mass of long economic groups for their hopeful future. Although under the 'Muslim Mass Contact' plan during the last days of its Ministry in 1937-9, it tried to convince the Muslim majority of their economic and social upliftment under the Congress rule in India, the Congress outrightly failed to gain their confidence. On the other hand, Jinnah availed the opportunity of exploiting the Muslim mass for their hankering for economic safety under political patronism.

The repercussions, whatsoever these are, have been realized by all groups of historians. Abdul Hamid accepts:

Partition was carried out in haste, launching the two independent states in the middle of August. The decision of a huge and complicated bureaucratic machine like the Government of India within ten weeks was a stupendous task, and the time limit proved treacherously brief for the smaller states. The result was not surprising. Outstanding differences which remained unresolved still continue to poison Indo-Pakistan relations.⁴³

But at the same time we know that the mankind cannot learn from history. And history repeats itself.

⁴³ Abdul Hamid, *Muslim Separatism in India*, Panjab (1967) p. 241.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

List of Congress Presidents and the Places of Annual Meetings from 1885 to 1947

<i>Year</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Place</i>
1885	W.C. Banerjee	Bombay
1886	Dada Bhai Naoroji	Calcutta
1887	Badruddin Tayabji	Madras
1888	G. Yulu	Allahabad
1889	W. Wedderburn	Bombay
1890	Phirozshah Mehta	Calcutta
1891	Ananda Charlu	Nagpur
1892	W.C. Banerjee	Allahabad
1893	Dada Bhai Naoroji	Lahore
1894	A. Web	Madras
1895	Surendranath Banerjee	Poona
1896	M.R. Sayani	Calcutta
1897	Sir Shankaran Mayer	Amraoti
1898	Ananda Mohan Bose	Madras
1899	R.C. Dutt	Lucknow
1900	Sir N.G. Chandravarkar	Lahore
1901	D.E. Wacha	Calcutta
1902	Surendranath Banerjee	Allahabad
1903	Lal Mohan Ghosh	Madras

<i>Year</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Place</i>
1904	H.E.A. Cotton	Bombay
1905	G.K. Gokhale	Banaras
1906	Dada Bhai Naoroji	Calcutta
1907	Rash Behari Ghosh	Surat
1908	Rash Behari Ghosh	Madras
1909	Madan Mohan Malaviya	Lahore
1910	W. Wedderburn	Allahabad
1911	Bisan N. Dhar	Calcutta
1912	R.M. Mudhalkar	Bankripore
1913	Nawab Syed Mohammad	Karachi
1914	Bhupendra Nath Basu	Madras
1915	S.P. Sinha	Bambay
1916	Ambika Charan Majumdar	Lucknow
1917	Annie Besant	Calcutta
1918	Syed Hasan Imam (Special)	Bombay
1919	Motilal Nehru	Amritsar
1920	Lala Lajpat Rai	Calcutta
1921	C.V. Raghvacharya	Nagpur
1922	Hakim Ajmal Khan	Ahmedabad
1923	Chittaranjan Das	Gaya
1924	Abul Kalam Azad	Delhi
1925	Mohammad Ali	Coconad
1926	M.K. Gandhi	Belgaum
1927	Sarojini Naidu	Cawnpore
1928	Srinivas Ayangar	Gauhati
1929	M.A. Ansari	Madras
1930	Motilal Nehru	Calcutta
1931	Jawaharlal Nehru	Lahore
1932	Vallabhbhai Patel	Karachi
1933	Ranchohaddas Amritlal	Delhi
1934	Mrs. Sengupta	Calcutta

<i>Year</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Place</i>
1935	Rajendra Prasad	Bombay
1936	Jawaharlal Nehru	Lucknow
1937	Jawaharlal Nehru	Faizpur
1938	Subhas Chandra Bose	Haripur
1939	Subhas Chandra Bose	Tripuri
1940	Abul Kalam Azad	Ramgarh
1941	Abul Kalam Azad	Bardoli
1942	Abul Kalam Azad	Wardha
1945	Abul Kalam Azad	Bombay
1946	Abul Kalam Azad	Bombay
1946	Jawaharlal Nehru	Delhi
1947	Jawaharlal Nehru	Delhi

It is worth noting that from 1920 to 1946, the Congress Working Committee every year had been passing one of its resolutions on the Muslim Minority problem.

Appendix II

Chart of All-India Muslim League Sessions 1906-1940

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>President</i>
Dacca	30 December 1906	Nawab Salimullah Bahadur
Karachi	30 December 1907	Sir Adamjee Pirbhoy
Aligarh	March 1908	Mr. Shah Din
Amritsar	December 1908	Syed Ali Imam
Delhi	January 1910	Sir Ghulam Ali Khan Bahadur
Nagpur	December 1910	Syed Habiullah
Calcutta	March 1912	Nawab Salimullah Bahadur
Lucknow	March 1913	Mian Mohammad Shafi
Agra	December 1913	Sir Ibrahim Rahimtulla
Bombay	December 1915	Mr. Mazharul Haque
Lucknow	December 1916	Mr. M.A. Jinnah
Calcutta	December 1917	Raja of Mahmudabad
Bombay	August 1918	Raja of Mahmudabad
Delhi	December 1918	Mr. A.K. Fazi-ul-Haque
Amritsar	December 1919	Hakim Ajmal Khan
Calcutta	September 1920	Mr. M.A. Jinnah
Nagpur	December 1920	Dr. M.A. Ansari
Ahmedabad	December 1921	Maulana Hasrat Mohani

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>President</i>
Lucknow	March 1923	Ghulam Mohammad Bhugri
Lahore	May 1924	Mr. M.A. Jinnah
Bombay	December 1924	Syed Riza Ali
Aligarh	December 1925	Sir Abdur Rahim
Delhi	December 1926	Sheikh Abdul Qadir
Calcutta (Jinnah group)	December 1927	Moulvi Mohammad Yakub
Lahore (Shafi group)	January 1928	Sir Muhammad Shafi
Calcutta	December 1928	Raja of Mahmudabad
Allahabad	December 1930	Sir Muhammad Iqbal
Delhi	December 1931	Choudhury Zafarullah Khan
Howrah	October 1933	Mian Abdul Aziz
Delhi	November 1933	Hafiz Hidayat Hussain
Bombay	April 1936	Syed Wazir Hasan
Lucknow	October 1937	Mr. M.A. Jinnah
Calcutta	April 1938	Mr. M.A. Jinnah
Patna	December 1938	Mr. M.A. Jinnah
Lahore	March 1940	Mr. M.A. Jinnah

(From 1937 to 1947 Jinnah continued as the President of All India Muslim League)

Appendix III

The Strength of Muslim Delegates in Annual Congress Sessions between 1885 and 1894

<i>Year</i>	<i>Hindus</i>	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Total</i>
1885	58	2	72
1886	387	33	436
1887	492	81	607
1888	965	221	1,248
1889	1,502	254	1,889
1892	520	87	625
1893	732	63	867
1894	1,118	20	1,163

From Chapter Two, The Origin of Nationalism of the Book
Britain and Muslim India, by K.K. Aziz

Note : *Quarterly Review*, October 1895, p. 432.

The total, apart from Hindu and Muslim delegates, includes other delegates as well, figures for which have not been given, as they are not concerned with the present study.

Appendix IV

Table of the Result of the General Election, 1937

<i>Provinces</i>	<i>Total No. of seats</i>	<i>No. of seats won by Congress</i>	<i>Total No. of Muslim seats</i>	<i>Seats won by Muslim League</i>	<i>No. of seats won by other Muslim groups</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6
Madras	215	150	28	11	17
Bombay	175	86	29	20	9
Bengal	250	54	117	40	77
U.P.	228	134	64	27	37
Punjab	175	18	84	1	83
Bihar	152	98	39	—	39
C.P.	112	70	14	—	14
N.W.F.P.	50	19	26	—	26
Assam	108	33	34	9	25
Orissa	60	36	4	—	4
Sind	60	7	36	—	36
Total	1,585	714	485	108	377

Appendix V

Extracts from Gandhi-Jinnah Correspondence

Tithal, May 22, 1937.

Dear Shri Jinnah,

Kher has given me your message. I wish I could do something but I am utterly helpless. My faith in unity is as bright as ever, only I see no daylight out of the impenetrable darkness, and in such distress I cry out to God for light.

Yours sincerely,
M.K. Gandhi

.....

Letter from Mr. Gandhi to Mr. Jinnah

Dated Segaon, October 19, 1937.

I carefully went through your speech at Lucknow, and I felt deeply hurt over your misunderstanding of my attitude. My letter was in answer to a specially private message you

had sent to me. It represented my deepest feeling. The letter was purely personal. Were you right in using it as you did ?

As I read it, the whole of your speech is a declaration of war. Only, I had hoped you would reserve poor me as a bridge between the two. I see that you want no bridge. I am sorry. It takes two to make a quarrel. You won't find me one, even if I cannot become a peace-maker.

This is not for publication, unless you desire it. It is written in all good faith and out of an anguished heart.

.....

Letter from Mr. Gandhi to Mr. Jinnah

Dated Segaon, Feb. 3, 1938

You seem to deny that your speech was a declaration of war, but your letter pronouncements too confirm the first impression. How can I prove what is a matter of feeling ? In your speeches I miss the old nationalist. When in 1915 I returned from the self-imposed exile in South Africa, everybody spoke of you as one of the staunchest of nationalists and the hope of both Hindus and Muslims. Are you still the same Mr. Jinnah ? If you say you are, in spite of your speeches, I shall accept your word. Lastly, you want me to come forward with some proposal. What proposal can I make except to ask you on bended knees to be what I had thought you were. But the proposals to form a basis of unity between the two communities, has surely got to come from you.

This is again not for publication, but for your eyes. It is the cry of a friend, not of an opponent.

.....

Letter from Mr. Jinnah to Mr. Gandhi

Dated New Delhi, Feb. 25, '38

You say that when in 1915 you returned from South Africa

everybody spoke of me as one of the staunchest of nationalists and hope of both Hindus and Muslims, and you ask me a question, 'Are you still the same Jinnah?' And proceed further to say, 'If you say you are, in spite of your speeches, I shall accept your word'. And you say that in my speeches you miss the old nationalist. Do you think that you are justified in saying that? I would not like to say what people spoke of you in 1915 and what they speak and think of you today. Nationalism is not the monopoly of any single individual, and in these days it is very difficult to define it, but I don't wish to pursue this line of controversy any further.

You conclude by saying, 'Lastly you want me to come forward with some proposal. What proposal can I make except to ask you on bended knees to be what I had thought you were, but the proposals, to form the basis of unity between the two communities, have surely got to come from you.' I think you might have spared your appeal and need not have preached to me on your bended knees to be what you had thought I was.

As regards the formulation of proposals which would form the basis of unity do you think that this can be done by correspondence? Surely you know as much as I do what are the fundamental points in dispute. In my opinion, it is as much up to you to suggest ways and means of tackling the problem. If you genuinely and sincerely desire and you feel that the moment has come for you to step in, and with your position and influence you are prepared to take the matter up earnestly, I will not fail to render all the assistance I can.

.....

Mr. Gandhi's Letter to Mr. Jinnah

Dated January 16, 1940.

Dear Mr. Qaid-e-Azam,

The purpose of writing this letter is to send you the enclosed advance copy of the article I have sent to the 'Harijan'. I have written it to further the end I have read in your recent messages

and actions. I know that you are quite capable of rising to the height required for the noble motive attributed to you. I do not mind your opposition to the Congress. But you plan to amalgamate all the parties opposed to the Congress at once gives your movement a national character. If you succeed you will free the country from communal incubus, and in my humble opinion give a lead to the Muslims and others for which you will deserve the gratitude not only of the Muslims but of all the other communities. I hope that my interpretation is correct. If I am mistaken you will please correct me.

It is a purely personal, private, friendly letter. But you are free to make public use of it if you think it is necessary.

Yours sincerely,
M.K. Gandhi

.....

Letter from Mr. M.A. Jinnah to Mr. Gandhi

Mount Pleasant Road,
Malabar Hill,
Bombay.
January 21, 1940

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am in receipt of your letter of 16th January and the advance copy of the article you have sent to the 'Harijan'. I not only thank you for your courtesy but also for your anxiety to further the end you have been reading in my messages and actions. I, however, regret to have to say that your premises are wrong as you start with the theory of an Indian Nation that does not exist, and naturally therefore, your conclusions are wrong. . .

I am glad to learn that you are not ruffled by the 'Deliverance Day' greeting sent to you from Gulbarga. It was indeed noble of you to join in the silent prayer "Long Live Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah". Although these are trivial matters, I nevertheless appreciate that you have realized the true inward meaning and

significance of the "Deliverance Day".

It is true that many non-Congress Hindus expressed their sympathy with the Deliverance Day in justice to our cause, so also the leaders of the Justice Party and the Scheduled Castes, and the Parsis who have suffered. But I am afraid that the meaning which you have tried to give to this alignment shows that you have not appreciated the true significance of it. It was partly a cause of "adversity bringing strange bedfellows together" and partly because common interest may lead Muslims and minorities to combine. I have no illusions in the matter, and let me say again that India is not a nation, nor a country. It is a sub-continent composed of nationalities, Hindus and Muslims being the two major nations. Today you deny that religion can be a main factor in determining a nation, but you yourself, when asked what your motive in life was, "the thing that leads us to do what we do", whether it was religious or social, or political, said: "Purely religious! This was the question asked me by the late Mr. Montagu when I accompanied a deputation which was purely political. 'How you, a social reformer', he exclaimed, 'have found your way into this crowd?' My reply was that it was only an extension of my social activity. I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind, and that I could not do unless I took part in politics. The gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity. It provides a moral basis to all other activities which they would otherwise lack, reducing life to a maze of 'sound and fury', signifying nothing'."

More than any one else, you happen to be the man today who commands the confidence of Hindu India and are in a position to deliver the goods on their behalf. Is it too much to hope and expect that you might play your legitimate role and abandon your chase after a mirage? Events are moving fast, a campaign of Polemics, or your weekly discourse in the 'Harijan' on metaphysics, philosophy and ethics, or your peculiar doctrines regarding Khaddar, ahimsa and spinning are not going to win India's freedom. Action and statesmanship

alone will help us in our forward march. I believe that you might still rise to your stature in the service of our country and make your proper contribution towards leading India to contentment and happiness.

Your Sincerely,
M.A. Jinnah

M.K. Gandhi, Esq.
Segaon.

Chronology of Events

1919

- 14 March The All-India Muslim League elected eight delegates to proceed to London in connection with the Reforms scheme.
- 4 May Gandhi wrote to Maulana Abdul Bari praising the idea of a mixed Hindu-Muslim Commission for Communal Unity.
- 18 September Gandhi spoke on the Khilafat at a public meeting in Bombay.
- 17 October Khilafat Day observed all over India.
- 31 October "No peace celebrations until Khilafat question satisfactorily settled", Gandhi wired Sabarmati Ashram.
- 24 November Hindu-Muslim session of Khilafat Congress: Gandhi presided. Resolution declared India's unwillingness to participate in peace celebrations until Khilafat question was settled.
- 5 December Hindu-Muslim unity meeting at Sheikhupura where Gandhi spoke.

1920

- 19 January All-India Khilafat deputation headed by Dr.

- Ansari and organised by Ali Brothers received by the Viceroy.
- 15 February Third session of the All-India Khilafat Conference held in Bombay.
- 17 March Khilafat delegation in England received by the Prime Minister.
- 19 March Second Khilafat Day : All-India hartal observed by complete stoppage of all work, fasting, prayer and Khilafat meetings all over India.
- 12 May All-India Khilafat Committee meeting held in Bombay to discuss Gandhi's Non-Cooperation project which was eventually adopted.
- 1 June Joint Hindu-Muslim Conference at Allahabad to consider the next step to be taken in the Khilafat cause.
- 18 July The Council of the All-India Muslim League met at Lucknow and passed a number of resolutions relating to the Turkish peace terms.
- 1 August Third Khilafat Day observed all over India.
- 7 September Special Session of the All-India Muslim League in Calcutta with Jinnah as President.
- 19 November All-India Ulemas' Conference held in Delhi.
- 29 December All-India Muslim League met at Nagpur under Dr. M.A. Ansari.
- 1921
- 11 March Montagu received the Indian Muslim Delegation to the Near East Conference, at the India Office.
- 17 August At a luncheon at the Savoy Hotel M. M. Chhotani said that he and his colleagues of the Khilafat Deputation were returning to India completely disappointed.

- 25 October Montagu made a statement in the House of Commons of the trouble arising from the "Moplah Rebellion".
- 1 November Ali Brothers sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

1922

- 7 January V. Kunhamad Haji, 'the Moplah King', arrested with retinue and arms in Malabar.
- 8 January Writing in the *Navajivan*, Gandhi suggested steps for Hindu-Muslim unity.
- January-February C.F. Andrews visited Malabar to rebuild Hindu-Muslim unity after Moplah Riots.
- 12 March Gandhi stressed the importance of Hindu-Muslim unity in a letter to Hakim Ajmal Khan.
- 19 April The Aga Khan appealed to Muslims not to lose their temper and become despondent.
- 4 May Azad Sobhani. appealed to Moplahs against forcibly converting Hindus.
- 27 September The Council of the All-India Muslim League assured Mustapha Kamal of every possible assistance on behalf of Indian Muslims.
- 7 October Guru-Ka-Bagh Affair: 160 Akalis arrested.
- 30 December The All-India Hindu Mahasabha held its annual conference at Gaya under the presidency of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

1923

- 30 January Maulana Azad and Pandit Malaviya were deputed to visit Multan to bring about reconciliation between the Hindus and Muslims of that town.

- 20 July Joint Hindu-Muslim manifesto issued for an All-India celebration on the Turkish triumph at Lausanne.
- 16 December The Bengal Hindu-Muslim Pact adopted.
- 29 December The fifth session of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema opened at Cocanada under Syed Hussain Ahmed.

1924

- 22 May Shaukat Ali issued a statement concerning the reconstruction of Muslim society.
- 12 August All-India Congress Committee appointed Gandhi, Jinnah, Malaviya, Bhagwan Das and Kitchlew to take up the question of Hindu-Muslim unity.
- 18 September Gandhi began his 21 days' fast as a penance for Hindu-Muslim quarrels and issued an appeal for unity.
- 26 September Unity Conference opened in Delhi; attended by 300 All-India delegates.
- September Communal riots in Kohat.
- 9 December Punjab Khilafat conference urged Gandhi to persuade Hindus to accept communal representation on a proportional basis in the councils, local bodies and the services.

1925

- 12 January Hindus and Muslims of Kohat signed a reconciliation agreement.
- 23 January All Parties' Conference in Delhi: Gandhi presided.
- 26 March Gandhi-Shaukat Ali statement on the Kohat tragedy.
- 7 May Master Tara Singh introduced the Sikh Gurdwara and Shrines Bill in the Punjab Assembly.

- 17 July All-Muslim Parties' Conference at Amritsar.
- 31 August The Sikh Gurdwara Act passed in the Assembly.
- 3 November Swarajist leaders addressed a meeting at Nagpur advocating Hindu-Muslim Unity.
- 29 December All-India Hindu Mahasabha met at Kanpur under the presidentship of N.C. Kelkar.

1926

- 3 April The Central Sikh League condemned communal representation.
- 29 April Special Khilafat conference in Delhi; Maulana Mohammad Ali criticised the Hindu leaders.
- 21 July Serious riot in Calcutta during the Muharram procession.
- 27 July Post-riot conference in Calcutta of Hindu and Muslim citizens led by Maharaja of Burdwan and Nawab of Murshidabad; Sir B.N. Mitra's proposal for a conciliation board.
- 23 December Murder of Swami Shraddhanand in Delhi by a Muslim fanatic; horror and indignation throughout the country.
- 28 December Special session of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha opened at Gauhati under the presidentship of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

1927

- 20 March Meeting of 30 prominent Muslim leaders in Delhi agreed to the institution of joint electorates under certain conditions.
- 17 April All-India Shuddhi Conference at Patna: tributes to Swami Shraddhanand.
- 20 April Dr. B.S. Moonje called for Hindu-Muslim unity to attain Swaraj.

- 6 July Tense situation in Lahore following Rangila Rasul case; prominent Khilafatists arrested for disobeying magisterial order prohibiting meetings.
- 6 August Sir Sankaran Nair pleaded for inter-caste fusion and joint electorates.
- 22 September The "Unity Conference" at Simla broke up on its failure to arrive at a decision on the question of cow-slaughter and "music before the mosque".

1928

- 12 February All-Parties' Conference met in Delhi.
- 28 August All-Parties' Conference to discuss the Nehru Committee Report opened at Lucknow in an atmosphere of toleration and goodwill under the presidentship of Dr. Ansari.
- 13 October The All-Bengal Muslim Youngmens' Conference resolved to banish communalism from the country.
- 3 November Jinnah rejects "Nehru Report".
- 4 November Maulana Shaukat Ali condemned the Mahasabha and complained that the Hindus and their leaders had been unfair to the Muslim community.

1929

- 1 January The Delhi Muslim All-Parties' Conference demanded retention of separate electorates.
- 11 August A closely guarded secret meeting of Gandhi, Jinnah and Ali Brothers was arranged by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu in Bombay with a view to amending the Nehru Report in such a way as to make it fully acceptable to all sections of Muslims.

- 8 September All-India Muslim Conference at Simla advised Muslims not to attend the Lahore Session of the Congress.
- 30 December The All-Parties' Muslim Conference stated in Calcutta that Muslims would on no account tolerate the substitution of British domination in India by the tyranny of the majority.

1930

- 2 January Maulana Azad and Dr. Ansari appealed to the Muslims to join the national struggle for independence.
- 11 January The Sikh All-Parties' Conference demanded adequate representation in the central and administrative bodies of Punjab.
- 26 February Unity Conference in New Delhi considered measures for effecting a communal settlement.
- 5 July The Executive Board of the All-Parties Muslim Conference declared: "The report of the Simon Commission as a whole is unacceptable to us."
- 9 August The Bengal Muslim Conference held in Calcutta declared: "India has no meaning for us without safeguards for our rights and interests."
- 6 September Hindu-Muslim clash over the Ganapati procession in Bombay: 26 persons injured.

1931

- 22 February Gandhi addressed the All-India Muslim League and pleaded for Hindu-Muslim unity.
- 18 April The Nationalist Muslims' Conference held under the presidency of Sir Ali Imam pleaded for joint electorates.
- 22 April Dr. M.A. Ansari said, "Joint electorates and adult franchise would form the basis of discussion both with our own co-religionists as well as with the Hindus or Sikhs."

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- 7 June Abdul Ghaffar Khan pleaded for communal amity at a public meeting in Bardoli.
- 8 August The U.P. Muslim Conference held under the presidentship of Maulana Shaukat Ali criticised the Nehru Report.
- 1 October The Aga Khan, Maulana Shaukat Ali and other Muslim delegates of the Round Table Conference met British M.Ps. and promised that "they would stand by Britain through thick and thin".
- 1932
- 8 March Prominent members of the Indian Christian community in the United Provinces issued a statement in favour of joint electorates.
- 2 April Maulana Shaukat Ali wrote to Mrs. Sarojini Naidu charging the Congress with picketing the Muslim firms in Bombay.
- 8 June The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim Conference met at Simla and pleaded for the protection of the rights of minorities.
- 1-5 July Communal riots in Bombay.
- 7 July A permanent board of conciliation was appointed to ensure peace and communal harmony in Bombay.
- 16 August Communal Award announced simultaneously in England and India.
- 20 September Gandhi commences fast unto death in protest against the Communal Award.
- 26 September Gandhi ends his fast.
- 23 December C. Vijayaraghavachariar, President of the Unity Conference held at Allahabad addressed the delegates.
- 1933
- 17 February Formation of the All-India Muslim League in Punjab, as to make the Muslim League in

- 22 March Dr. B.S. Moonje appealed for unity.
- 26 April Shaukat Ali expressed his wishes to promote peace between Hindus and Muslims.
- 21 July Communal Award and Poona Pact; searching cross-examination of Sir Samuel Hoare by Sir N.N. Sircar.
- 3 September Bengal Muslims opposed reopening of the Communal Award by the Joint Parliamentary Committee.
- 17 December All-Parties' Muslim Conference resolved to foster better relations with other communities.
- 1934
- 2 April The Council of the All-India Muslim League accepted the Communal Award.
- 13 April "*The Communal Award, a great injustice to the Hindu Community*", declared the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha.
- 1 October "*Communal Award a bar to Sweraj*" declared Pandit Malaviya.
- 12 October The All-Bengal Muslim Young Mens' Conference adopted resolutions protesting against the anti-Communal Award campaign.
- 1935
- 20 July Communal situation in Lahore worsened.
- 25 August Communal riots at Secunderabad: three persons killed and eighty-eight injured.
- 1936
- 16 February The All-India Muslim Conference outlined the political development and aspirations of the Muslim Community in India.

- 11 April "The goal of the All-India Muslim League is responsible self-government for India", declared its President.
- 15 August Jinnah stressed the need for communal and inter-communal unity.
- 29 November Hindu-Muslim riot in Bombay: three Muslims and a Hindu killed.

1937

- 3 January Jinnah warned Congress not to interfere in Muslim affairs.
- 27 March Hindu-Muslim disturbance in Panipat on Holi festival; eight persons killed in police firing.
- 25 April Nehru and Jinnah issued counter-statements on the Congress bid to capture Muslim support.
- 25 July Jinnah issued a statement urging the need for Hindu-Muslim unity.
- 12 September Nehru deplored the formation of communal and sectarian groups for political purposes.
- 18 October The All-India Muslim League passed a resolution opposing the introduction of Federation as embodied in the Government of India Act of 1935.

1938

- 14 April Subhas Chandra Bose appealed to Muslims to join the Congress.
- 17 April Jinnah appealed to both the communities to realize their moral obligations to each other.
- 28 April Gandhi had an interview with Jinnah in Bombay regarding the communal question.

- 25 July Gandhi wrote to Jinnah that the Congress was unable to accept his claim that the All-India Muslim League should be recognized as the sole representative and mouth-piece of the entire Muslim population of India.
- 7 December Aga Khan stated that he would do his best for bringing about communal unity.
- 15 December The Congress Working Committee passed a resolution declaring the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League as communal organizations.
- 18 December Liaquat Ali Khan said that Muslims desired an honourable settlement with the Congress but no agreement could be arrived at so long as the Congress was not prepared to recognize the League as the only representative organization of Indian Muslims.
- 1939
- 1 January Jinnah said that the Congress claim to be the 'only body that can deliver the goods on behalf of the people of India' was preposterous.
- 12 February The communal riot in Kanpur: 20 persons killed and 200 injured.
- 17 February V.D. Savarkar criticised the policy of the Congress Governments of placating Muslims at the cost of Hindus in provinces where the latter were in a majority.
- 22 March Jinnah declared that the real victory would not come to the Congress until it had removed the barriers between the two peoples.
- 28 May Obaidullah Sindhi stressed the need for Hindu-Muslim unity to attain India's freedom and also advised Muslims to join the Congress.

- 29 September Jinnah said, "I have always believed in a Hindu-Muslim pact. But such a pact can only be an honourable one, and not a pact which will mean destruction of one and the survival of the other."
- 2 November Gandhi-Jinnah meeting in Delhi: hopes of an agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League on a joint proposal to be placed before the Viceroy for the settlement of India's political difficulties.
- 7 November Jinnah said, "So far as I am concerned, I shall always welcome the Congress leaders bringing about a settlement between the two major communities of India.
- 22 December Observance of a 'Day of Deliverance' by the Muslim League on the resignation of the Congress Ministries.
- 1940
- 7 January Jinnah released the correspondence which passed between him and Nehru. Jinnah reiterated the League's demand for recognition as the 'authoritative and representative organization of Muslims in India'.
- 22 March Jinnah suggested that India should be divided into 'autonomous national states' and the two major nations be given separate homelands.
- 24 May The Raja of Mahmudabad explained the Muslim League partition scheme.
- 1 June Nehru deprecated the idea of dividing India into Hindu and Muslim States.
- 17 September The Muslim League's demands were denounced at a public meeting (at Simla) of Hindus and Sikhs with Raja Sir Daljit Singh in the chair.

- 12 October The Working Committee of All India Hindu League decided upon the creation of an anti-Pakistan front.
- 1 November Sir Sikander Hyat Khan said, "The Mahatma's (Gandhi's) campaign amounted not only to stabbing Britain in the back, but also to a betrayal of the best interests of India and the Islamic world."
- 17 November Fazlul Haq, Premier of Bengal, said, "To a certain point communalism is essential; it is a kind of sacred feeling."
- 8 December Jinnah said, "If the Congress wants to achieve independence, there is no other way of doing it except by the two communities agreeing to live as separate entities. Pakistan is the only way to India's freedom."

1941

- 5 January Third stage of Civil Disobedience Campaign began.
- 27 Jan. Subhas Chandra Bose escaped to Germany.
- 13-14 March Non-Party Conference in Bombay.
- 1 July Wavell appointment in India.
- 24 Aug. League Working Committee ordered three League Premiers of Panjab, Bengal and Assam to resign from Working Committee.
- 10 Sept. Fazlul Haq resigned from national defence council.
- 11 Dec. Fazlul Haq expelled from the League.

1942

- 1 Jan. AICC met at Wardha.
- 22 March Cripps arrived in Delhi.
- 2 April Congress Working Committee rejected the Cripps Proposal.

12 April	Cripps left India for England.	?
29 April	AICC met at Allahabad.	
1 July	Jinnah, Hindu Mahasabha, Liberals, Communists and other leaders dissented from Congress appeal for civil disobedience.	
15 July	Rajagopalachari resigned from Congress.	
4 November	Rajagopalachari had talks with Jinnah.	
31 Dec.	Correspondence between Gandhi and Viceroy.	

1943

29 Jan.	Gandhi's announcement for fast.	
19 Feb.	Non-Party Conference	
22 Feb.	Government issued paper on Congress responsibility for disturbances in 1942.	
20 Oct.	Lord Wavell succeeded Lord Linlithgow as Viceroy in India.	

1944

30 July	Jinnah dismissed Rajagopalachari's formula.	
9-27 Sept.	Gandhi Jinnah talks.	
3 Dec.	Jinnah refused to meet Sapru.	

1945

Feb.	League Ministry in Sind, N.W.F.P. defeated.	
23 March	Wavell went to England.	
14 June	Wavell broadcasts his proposal to advance India towards full self-government.	
25 June	Simla conference.	

1946

11 Jan.	Day celebrated by Muslim League as day of victory.	
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- 25 March Cabinet Mission arrived in Delhi.
- 20 November Viceroy issued invitations for meeting of Constituent assembly.
- 30 Dec. V.P. Menon suggested with the help of Patel that power should be transferred to two Central governments on basis of Communal status.
- 1947
- 22 March Mountbatten arrived in Delhi.
- 15 August India and Pakistan became independent. Jinnah sworn in as Governor-General of Pakistan and Mountbatten as Governor-General of India. Pakistan Cabinet headed by Liaqat Ali; Indian Cabinet by Nehru.

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